MONTEZUMA

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MONTEZUMA

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY
IN FOUR ACTS
WITH PROLOGUE

BY

PAUL BARR-KAYSER

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MONTEZUMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MONTEZUMA II, Emperor of the Aztecs.

IOHUALICAHUA, his young son by the first of his legitimate wives, Tecalco.

CUITLAHUA, his brother, the Prince of Iztapalapan.

GUATAMOZIN, his nephew, sueing for the hand of Tecuichpo, the Emperor's eldest daughter.

HUTEPEC, a friend of Guatamozin.

MODOC, an aide of Guatamozin.

CACAMA, the Prince of Texcuco.

TETEPANQUEZAL, the Prince of Tacuba.

IZTLIL, the younger brother of Caçama and pretender to his throne, seeking, also, to outrival Guatamozin for the hand of Tecuichpo.

CIHUACA
TCALAC
MECAMECA } Counsellors of Montezuma.

TAPIA, Treasurer of Montezuma and Major-domo of the palace.

AYOTAC, Chief Usher of the Court.

MAXTLA, Chief of the Imperial Body-Guard.

SONOCAC, Ambassador of Montezuma to Cortez.

SECOND AMBASSADOR.

A COURIER.

MUALOX, Paba or High-Priest of the Temple of Quetzal, the Fair God, whose benign worship among the Aztecs, has fallen out of use.

YOLO, a Priest of Quetzal.

SECOND PRIEST OF QUETZAL.

A TLASCALAN SPY.

FIRST VOICE
SECOND VOICE
THIRD VOICE. } from the Aztec ranks.

ACATLAN, the second of Montezuma's legitimate wives.

TECUICHPO, eldest daughter of Montezuma by his wife, Tecalco.

NENETZIN, half-sister to Tecuichpo and her companion.

TIZNA, their female attendant.

HERNANDO CORTEZ, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, known among the Aztecs as "MALINCHE."

JUAN DE SALAZAR, his page.

PEDRO DE ALVARADO
GONZALO DE SANDOVAL
ALONSO DE AVILA
JUAN DE LEON
CRISTOVAL DE OLID
FRANCISCO DE LUJO
} Cavalier Officers under Cortez.

BARTOLOME DE OLMEDO, Father Confessor of Cortez and his men.

JUAN DIAZ, Catholic Licentiate of the Conquest.

FIRST PRIEST,
SECOND PRIEST,
and
DONA MARINA, daughter of a Tabascan cacique, the mistress and interpretess of Cortez, and being identified with the latter, known, also, among the Aztecs as "MALINCHE."

Totonac Indians; Aztec caciques, counsellors, warriors, guards, serving-men, patrol, populace, musicians and slaves; Spanish cavaliers, arquebusiers, spearsmen, and cannoneers; Tlascalan allies under Cortez.

Concubines and waiting-girls of Montezuma; dancing-girls of the Palace.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

INTRODUCTORY TABLEAU—The Coast of Mexico. (The Coming of the Spaniards.)

PROLOGUE—Tecuichpo's Chinampa.

ACT I—Montezuma's Dining-Hall.

ACT II SCENE 1—Azotea of the Temple of Quetzal.

SCENE 2—A Private Ante-Room in the Palace. (*Drop Scene.*)

SCENE 3—The Gate of Xolox, on the Southern Causeway, leading into the City of Tenochtitlan.

ACT III—The Council-Chamber in the Palace.

ACT IV, SCENE 1—The Western Azotea of the Temple of Huitzil.

SCENE 2—Montezuma's Apartments in the Spanish Quarters.

PERIOD—1519-1520.

LOCALITY—*Tenochtitlan, the ancient City of Mexico.*

INTRODUCTORY TABLEAU

SCENE—*The Coast of Mexico, near the present site of Vera Cruz.*

With tropical plants and trees at Right and Left—at Back, stretches a sandy coast, and, beyond that, the Gulf of Mexico.

The scene is discovered in semi-darkness, as during the first light of dawn. In the East, directly before the observer, the sun is gradually rising, unfolding a clear blue sky.

The swish of the sea, beating gently on the shore, is heard constantly throughout the scene, as well as the songs of many strange birds in the adjoining forests.

After a time, in the first rays of the sun, when the sea has lighted up considerably, a number of dots is discerned in the distance, enlarging as they approach, and finally discovered to be Spanish galleons of the Sixteenth Century.

As the ships approach steadily, and the Spanish royal standards are seen displayed on the masts and poops of the vessels, a rustling commotion is suddenly heard at Right, and a Totonac Indian emerges cautiously from the underbrush, gazes off with silent amazement at the approaching ships, falls on his hands and knees, ventures nearer, and with a sudden yell of fright, darts back into the forest.

Steadily the ships approach, tacking Right and Left, with the sun rising higher and higher, when three or four Indians emerge from the forest, led by the first, who points off in mingled terror and amazement, toward the ships. Struck with wonderment, they, in turn, fall on their hands and knees, and crawl cautiously nearer, when, suddenly, a light puff of smoke is expelled from the nearest vessel, and, not long after, allowing for sound to travel, the distant booming of a cannon is heard. This noise strikes veritable terror in the hearts of the Indians, and they in turn, scamper back into the forest.

Several shots of this nature are fired from the ships, when soon, the whole vicinity seems alive with Indians —men, women and children, who rush unto the stage, waving their arms in frantic terror, when the drop-curtain closes slowly on the scene.

During this pantomime, Sixteenth Century airs of Castile are played, which come to an abrupt end at the

lowering of the curtain, when in preparation for the Prologue, Tecuichpo's Chinampa on the Lake of Texcuco, the music changes at once from lively Spanish song to the sad, semi-melody of barbaric rhythm.

PROLOGUE

SCENE—*Tecuichpo's Chinampa on the Lake of Texcuco.*

The "chinampa" was a small floating-island of flowers and shrubbery, peculiarly associated with the Aztecs, whose city of Tenochtitlan was built, for the most part, on huge piles in the shallow lake of Texcuco, with several causeways, remarkable for their engineering, joining the chief part of the city with its suburbs on the main-land. The capital itself, being intersected with many canals, the "chinampa" seems a natural outgrowth of the pleasure-loving Aztecs, and the neighboring lakes of Texcuco and Chalco were filled with these floating islands of vegetation.

Rising from a mass of flowering shrubs is a white pavilion at Left, over which hang palm and willow trees—at Back, the curve of the chinampa is noticeable, with a landing, from which a carpeted pathway leads to the pavilion—At Right, is a conscious arrangement of shrubbery with a few date and banana trees, and extending to the water's edge, masses of delicate flowers.

With, perhaps, half the island represented in the scene, the quiet waters of the lake can be viewed for some distance around in the clear light of the sunshine.

Directly Back, in the center of the lake, rise the white stucco walls of Tenochtitlan, with its numerous towers, all topped by the main temple of Huitzil, the

Aztec War-god, with its receding platforms and surrounding flights of stairs. Off Left, leading out of the city, is the causeway to Tepeaca, north of the capital. Off Right is the shore of the mainland, dotted with the towns of Chimalhuacan, Ateuco and Tecucco, with the mountains of Ahualco stretching beyond, above which rise the peaks of Popacatepetl and Iztaccehuatl.

Within the pavilion hangs a luxurious hammock, above which, half-hidden, is a cage with a tame parrot. Near the hammock are carved stools, with cups and tortoise-shell spoons. The floor is covered with matting, while further into the pavilion is discerned a couch with a covering of fine feather-work.

(*The Princess Tecuichpo is rocking to and fro in the hammock, strumming something like a guitar, while her younger sister, Nenetzin, is seated on a stool near by, leaning forward in reflection, with her chin resting on her hands. They are just engaged in conversation. Tizna, the female attendant, is squatting near the landing, gazing across the water toward Tepeaca.*)

TECUICHPO (*interrupting the conversation to address Tizna*):

Do you not see him yet, Tizna?

TIZNA (*looking off*):

No, my lady.

NENETZIN (*with a sigh, while her elder sister continues to twang lightly at her guitar*):

Ah!

(*After a pause, in revery*):

That was a strange dream, Tecuichpo!

TECUICHPO (*in lassitude, as she lies back in the hammock*):

And stranger still, because a while before,
The 'tzin had led me to the temple yonder,
Where I first met the ancient Paba, Mualox,
Who told us all about the tale of Quetzal.

NENETZIN (*enthusiastically*):

Do you remember? (*Drawing closer.*)
Tell it to me!—

TECUICHPO (*slowly laying down her instrument*):

Why,—
We stood on the azotea, looking off
Toward Chalco, with the waving maize beyond,
And the pine-forests further, when Guatamo,
All of a sudden, touched me so,
(*touching Nenetzin on the arm*)
—and as
We turned, a low, deep voice called out, and there
I first saw Mualox, an old man with
A beard, all haggard, worn, with downcast eyes,
And as we went to meet him, he bemoaned
The loss of freedom in Tenochtitlan;
Wept bitterly and wrung his hands for grief
To be so bowed beneath a tyrant.

NENETZIN (*shocked*):

Did
He so?—Our father?—

TECUICHPO:

Ay, who else?

NENETZIN:

And dared—?

TECUICHPO:

But he is mad! Ay, Nenetzin, and so
Guatamo told me later!—He would cry
With sorrow, "Woe to Montezuma, in
The wrongs that he imposes on his people!

(*Pointing up*)

Pray to the Spirit, my children—the Great Spirit!
And it was then he told the tale of Quetzal.

(*Nenetzin, interested, draws still closer, resting her arm on Tecuichpo's knee.*)

How, at one time, he was a god in Aztlan;
Gave flowers to the fields, songs to the birds,
Made customs for the poor that they might rise
Into a nation; and, above all else,
Taught love—in the rich harvest of the wheatfields.
He was a god whose skin shone fairer than ours,
Dark hair and beard, with deep eyes like the sea!

NENETZIN (*in surprise*):

Ah, but Tecuichpo, that was your dream!

TECUICHPO (*mysteriously*):

H'm! I have seen him in my dreams beside!

(*Resuming her narrative.*)

But on a day, another god arose;
The people of the world had proved unkind,
And on the altars offered sacrifice
To the false god.—So Quetzal, driven off,
Sought shelter in Cholula for a while,
Inscribed his name upon the temple walls,

And reaching the great waters, built him there
A lone canoe of serpent skins, and with
The rising sun, sped for Tlapallan.

NENETZIN (*dreamily*):

Forever, over the sea!

TECUICHPO:

No!—Mualox
Had read deep in the vaults, beneath the temple,
That when, at last, an Emperor of Aztlan
Forgot his message and the truth in things,
Turning his mind to idle thoughts and pleasure,
That Quetzal would return to claim his own,
Cast dreadful vengeance in Anahuac—
And, in his rage, even Tenochtitlan
Would bow in shame before the flame of God!

NENETZIN (*after a pause, with childish awe*):

And would that mean——?

TECUICHPO:

Ah, dear child, who can tell?—

(*Twanging again at her guitar, after a meditative pause.*)

They say that Mualox is a great prophet!

NENETZIN (*after another pause*):

And to think—the world might end, Tecuichpo!

(TECUICHPO *gives a light, sad laugh as she shrugs her shoulders.*)

TIZNA (*suddenly exclaiming, as she looks off*):

I think I see him now, my lady!

TECUICHPO (*staring out of the hammock*):

Are

You sure,—the 'tzin?

(*Both* TECUICHPO *and* NENETZIN *run to the water's edge and look off, Left.*)

TIZNA:

Ay, he is coming here,

My lady.

NENETZIN (*after a pause, with her hand up to shield her eyes from the hot sun*):

That is not Guatamo!—

(*With a teasing laugh at Techuichpo.*)

Oh,

I know!

TECUICHPO (*disappointedly*):

You mean Lord Iztlil?

NENETZIN (*teasingly*):

Do you see?

His arms are filled with flowers for you!

TECUICHPO (*in lassitude, as she returns to the hammock*):

As though

I had not flowers enough—on my own chinampa!

(*Leaning back, once more, with her guitar.*)

NENETZIN (*with a teasing sigh*):

Ah, yes!

(*Flinging herself, playfully, in the hammock.*)

He is a great flatterer!

TECUICHPO:

Too much!
And, what is more, he comes too often!

NENETZIN (*in childish humor, as she rocks back and forth*):

Ay!
And so they say with love! Three are too many,
While one of three is sure to come too often!—

(TIZNA *has squatted back in her former posture. After a pause, while the two young Princesses are swinging lightly in the hammock, humming listlessly to the sound of* TECUICHPO'S *guitar, a gorgeous canoe, paddled by two slaves, glides up close the the landing, at Back, and* IZTLIL, *of the royal house of Texcuco, rises from it, in the nature of a formal call, with a huge bunch of flowers in his hands, and steps on the bank. The canoe is moved a little further below the landing. Both* TECUICHPO *and* NENETZIN *are seen, this time, to rise very reluctantly from their hammock.*)

IZTLIL (*addressing* TECUICHPO *with formal reserve, as he moves down to present her with the flowers*):

Dear Honored Princess, if your blest chinampa
Invites the wanderer to its shores, then do
Not blame a wayward inclination,
(*As he presents the flowers*)
—in
This tribute to its beauty!

TECUICHPO (*as she takes the flowers*):

My Lord Iztlil,
We judge a tribute from the source it comes,
I beg of you, be seated.

IZTLIL (*bowing, and turning instantly to* NENETZIN)

And for you,
My lady Nenetzin, they say the bud
Is the blown flower of to-morrow!

NENETZIN (*flippantly*):

You
Are very kind, my lord!—What would you say
Might happen day after to-morrow?

IZTLIL:

(*Laughingly*)

That,
Princess, only the Future holds!—
(*Instantly changing his manner, as he seats himself.*)
But I
Suppose you have not heard the news?

TECUICHPO (*starting*):

News?

IZTLIL:

Why,
The tianguez is crowded! The whole city,
In an uproar!

NENETZIN (*excitedly*):

And for what cause, my lord?

IZTLIL:

Strangers have landed south of Zempoalla!
What they intend is not made clear, and though
I hold my own opinion (*mysteriously*) there are some
Who say the god has come!

TECUICHPO (*excitedly in fear*):
The god?—

IZTLIL:
Yes, so
They say,—but then the people——!

NENETZIN:
But, my lord,
What manner of men are these?

IZTLIL (*shrugging his shoulders*):
All that I know
Is what the courier has just brought the city.
They come in floating houses, high from the waves,
Gliding like birds over the sea!

NENETZIN (*in wonderment*):
Oh!—

TECUICHPO (*reflectively*):
Strange!—

NENETZIN (*mysteriously*):
Then are they men, indeed, my lord?

IZTLIL:
They have
White skins, dark beards, and by some unseen power
Can bid the heavens to lighten when they will,
And thunder to crash out of hollow tubes.
(*With a careless gesture toward the city*)
Of course they say it's Quetzal over yonder,—
And I have heard that crazed priest, Mualox,

Drawing the public back to the God's worship,—
(*Contemptuously*)—
But then, of course, the fools——!

TECUICHPO (*indignantly*):

Can we afford
Never to listen?—This is strange, my lord,
And it may happen that a prophecy
Might bear some truth.

IZTLIL (*evasively*):

Sometimes,—there is no question.—
The Emperor has sent an embassy,
I hear, and in good time we'll know the reason.

TIZNA (*calling from the landing*):

My lady!

(*They all rise, and, after a short interval, another canoe glides up close to the landing, out of which steps* GUATAMOZIN, *a Prince of the reigning house of Montezuma, along with his friend,* HUTEPEC.)

TECUICHPO (*in greeting*):

Welcome, my lord 'tzin!—Ah, welcome!—
We have been waiting for some time, while here,
Lord Iztlil was more prompt.
(*Addressing Hutepec*)
Lord Hutepec,
You should have brought the 'tzin here sooner.

HUTEPEC (*smilingly*):

So
I strived to do, my lady, but the 'tzin

Is rightfully concerned in this strange news
From Zempoalla.

TECUICHPO:

So my lord informed us.—
Do you know their purpose?

HUTEPEC:

Ah, not for good!

GUATAMOZIN (*as he comes forward and joins the group*):

The Governor Teuhtlile believes that they
Have come to trade merely.

(*They all sit down.*)

IZTLIL (*throwing his head back with a laugh*):

Let Emperors
Keep a tight hand on their coffers, for the gods
Are very willing you should pamper them
Where treasure-stores are waiting.

GUATAMOZIN (*to Iztlil*):

I do hope
Your city would be prompt in such a tribute,—
If merely to save the Empire!

IZTLIL (*with quick resentment*):

Ha!—*My* city?

GUATAMOZIN:

That is, your brother's city,—or *your* city.

IZTLIL:

Texcuco was a city, you recall,

When Aztlan was a heap of rushes! (*With an insolent shrug*)
Now
It helps to pay the tribute!

TECUICHPO (*in smiling reproof*):
You complain,
My lord, of life itself?—Texcuco, now,
Is no less beautiful because Aztlan
Has triumphed!

IZTLIL (*bitterly*):
For how long, my lady?—

GUATAMOZIN (*a bit angrily*):
Till
The prestige of the Montezumas fades,
Lord Iztlil!

IZTLIL:
IZTLIL (*with a prophetic laugh*):
Then, 'tzin, look to your future!—

GUATAMOZIN (*rising angrily*):
Ah?—

IZTLIL (*rising at the same time*):
Prestige, you say?
(*With a toss of his head toward the city*)
Go yonder!—You will find
Humiliations!—For his serving-men,
Caciques! Ha!
(*With a bitter laugh*)
Princesses for concubines!

(*Lifting his hand threateningly*)—
There is not a tributary in this Empire,
But what is hungering for a thrust at Aztlan!

(TECUICHPO *and* NENETZIN *jump to their feet with indignant anger.*)

GUATAMOZIN (*clenching his fists*):
Have you come here to insult us,—*here!*

IZTLIL (*insolently*):
I say
Go off into the mountains,—not to pass
Tlascala,—look to the Totonacs,
Breathing their hour!—Beside, look to Comitlan,—
And Tangapan, off in Michuaca,—
Then tell me of your prestige!
(*Striking his breast*)
As for me,—
My father Huahpilli would have leave
Have drowned himself than to have lost Texcuco.
(*Bitterly*)—
My city?—Tell that to Cacama,—that
His brother never paid a tribute,—*never,*
Merely to have a province thrust upon him,—
My father's *kingdom!*—Did you say *my* city?
(*Venting forth with an insolent laugh*)—
The very gates of my own palace walls
Are closed to me,—my heritage, a shame!

GUATAMOZIN:
And so you blame us here, for a past judgment?—
Call on the Emperor yourself, if you
Believe he has unjustly treated you.

IZTLIL (*disdainfully*):

Call on the stars!
(*Brusquely*)—What does he think I mean?
That I shall plea for justice?—
No, by Mictlan!

GUATAMOZIN (*losing patience*):

Texcucan, I have listened to you, now,
Enough, by Huitzil! You have thrown these insults
At the Emperor, and, here, before the Princess
Tecuichpo! Now *I* shall have my word!
Do we forget, as a mere child, you showed
The blackguard in you!

(IZTLIL *flushes.*)

Every prophecy
Foretold nothing but evil, and it shows
Itself now as it did before!

TECUICHPO (*exclaiming, as she runs down*):

'Tzin!—'Tzin!

GUATAMOZIN (*unrestrainedly, at* IZTLIL):

Your father? It was he who counselled so,
That, on his death, Cacama took the seat,
Which otherwise would have belonged to you.
Blood of Huahpilli? You are a blot
Upon your father's honor! Now you think
To insult the throne of Aztlan! But for here,
Texcucan, and you'd answer me in that!
Go see the Emperor! If you dare,—speak out!
But do not come *here* with your bitterness!

IZTLIL (*with a low, forced laugh*):

Ha! Brave tzin! I am sorry for your burden!

To bear the honor of one's family
On his shoulders—is a grave undertaking. (*Bowing.*)
My ladies!

(*He saunters to the landing, and with one foot in his canoe and the other on the bank, turns with a sneer at* GUATAMOZIN.)

Your uncle, tzin, in all his sumptuous splendor,
In Mexico is yet the weakest monarch.

(*Pointing his finger at him.*)

I say, look forward to your dynasty,
For in his fall he may have need of me!

(GUATAMOZIN *steps forward impulsively.*)

You bid that I should see him,—so I shall!
And if he does not grant me justice,—woe!

(*Pointing Off.*)

The strangers are not far from here!

GUATAMOZIN (*furiously*):

You mean——?

IZTLIL (*derisively, as he quietly places his other foot into the canoe and claps his hands as an order to his slaves*):

Let matters rest awhile, 'tzin,—as they may.

(*Tauntingly, with a graceful wave of his hand, as he seats himself leisurely in the canoe*)—

But, by the gods, I pity you!—I pity!!

(GUATAMOZIN *rushes toward him with clenched fists, as the canoe just disappears Off Right, leaving* GUATAMOZIN *angrily watching, as it speeds farther and farther away over the lake. For some time,* IZTLIL'S *laughter and taunts are heard till they die in the distance. Slow curtain.*)

ACT I

SCENE—MONTEZUMA'S *Dining-Hall.*

At Back is a view of the inner gardens of the Palace. Entrances, Upper Right and Left. The walls consist of slabs of jasper and marble, richly decorated, here and there, with feather-work tapestries, peculiar to the Aztecs. The ceiling is low, made of carved cedar beams, ornamented with gilt. The floor throughout is covered with mats of woven grass.

At Right Center is a low table, spread with a fine linen cloth, and laid out with a set of delicate Cholulan ware. Behind is a wide cushion, used by Montezuma as a sort of combination seat and couch. In front of the table, encompassing a large area, is a mass of variegated foodstuffs, kept warm by means of chafing-dishes. To shut off the royal diner from the curious, an elaborate gilt screen of carved wood stretches back of the table, Upper Right. Situated in different parts of the hall are large censers, in which copal resin is burning, filling the hall with perfume.

(TAPIA, *the Steward, is discovered at Center, giving orders to a group of young caciques, acting as serving-men, who are running in with hot dishes and laying them on the floor near the table.* TAPIA *is solemnly counting the dishes on the ends of his fingers, when* GUATAMOZIN *and* HUTEPEC *enter at Back in expectant manner, look about them, and, disappointed, move toward* TAPIA.)

TAPIA (*calling to one of the young men, who is just disappearing around the screen*)—
Ho, Nanatama! Bring the sauce for the quails!

GUATAMOZIN (*addressing Tapia*):
My Lord Tapia!—

TAPIA (*turning with a start*):

Yes, 'tzin?—

GUATAMOZIN:

By a chance,
Might you have seen Lord Cuitlahua?

TAPIA (*crustily*):

'Tzin,
I notice nothing in the midst of duty!
(*Intercepting sharply one of the young caciques, struggling under a huge chafing-dish*)—
Ho, there! What's that?
(*Lifting the lid and smelling*)—
Poof!—Whoof!—Burnt!! Take it back
(*Slapping the lid back on the dish.*)
And bring another fresher!
(*The young cacique scampers back, while Tapia calls out impatiently*)—
Nanatama!
(*Clapping hands imperatively.*)

GUATAMOZIN (*as he smiles to himself*):

My lord Tapia, would you please inform us
If they expect an embassy to-night?

TAPIA (*crustily*):

It should arrive,—it *should*,—some time this evening!
(*In the hurrying and scurrying, Nanatama re-enters with the sauce, and* TAPIA *turns to him quickly.*)
Whoof! Set it there!

(*The dish is carefully laid down.*)

What next

(*Clapping his hands and starting for Upper Right.*)

—Ah, come with me!

(*Exit* TAPIA, *Upper Right, followed at his heels by a raft of serving-men. At the same time* GUATAMOZIN *moves away toward Left Center as* CUITLAHUA *enters, Fourth L. E. The latter, who is* MONTEZUMA'S *brother, is an oldish man of stern, military aspect, with hair turned slightly gray. He enters moodily on the scene.*)

GUATAMOZIN (*to* CUITLAHUA, *as he enters*):

Uncle, why all these messages,—and this
Delay in embassies?

CUITLAHUA (*with a sigh, with troubled aspect*):

Sh!—Hold your patience,
Guatamo!—We shall hear from Sonocac.
(*With sad introspection*)—
Humph! As I think of his election,—proud,
Yet humbly clothed,—a gentle mendicant,
Sweeping the stairs of the Great Temple!
(*With a sad laugh*)—
Now, his very family is bowed beneath him,
And when, it seems, fate frowns, for a single instant,
No subject in Anahuac is more
A slave in his belief of Quetzal.
(*Discouragingly*)—
Ah,
What need that he should question you, when he
Will cast aside your answers,—while the priest,

Whom he would seem to loathe, still, by some chance,
Has hold of a loose chord in him. He walks
His chamber like a madman,—calls the priest,
The scum of Mictlan,—yet confides in him,—
Asks him the interpretation of his dreams,
To which he listens with an open wonder,
Glad to forget, yet still without the will
To disbelieve.

(*Raising his voice, indignantly, as he points Off*)—
It was the other night,
He even sought the priest up in his temple!

GUATAMOZIN:

Yes, so I heard from Yolo.

CUITLAHUA (*disgustedly*):

Pfa!—Is that
A mind to rule in Aztlan? Is this priest
The hand of Destiny that Montezuma
Should be seeking him, like a fond slave
After his master?

GUATAMOZIN:

He is made to believe,
For the same causes Mualox believes,
That it is violence and crime in Aztlan
Calling the god back from Tlapallan.
(CUITLAHUA *turns away in disgust.*)
And queerly, now, at the appointed time,
We hear of these strange people!

CUITLAHUA (*with a skeptical smile*):

Pfa!—If they
Are gods, what do they want of gifts?—Have they

No power to shatter mountains for their treasure?
These people are not fools,—nor are they gods!

HUTEPEC (*addressing* CUITLAHUA):

Is there no argument, my lord, that moves him?

CUITLAHUA (*in pessimistic reflection*):

Nothing! All that he does is to ask questions,—
And then, again, repeat the selfsame questions,—
While if you venture to advise him,——

GUATAMOZIN (*impulsively*):

Then,
By Huilzil, I shall speak to him!

CUITLAHUA (*with a parental smile, as he lays his hands on his shoulders*):

You?
Ha! I was young like you, and spoke like you,
Back in the time the distant tribes were conquered.
I was as young as you are, then,—
(*With indifference*)—
but I—

(*Here* TAPIA *is seen to re-enter at Back, and beckon Right and Left, when immediately the murmur of an assemblage is heard approaching, ever increasing in volume.*)

CUITLAHUA (*with decision, as he turns away*):

First let the embassy arrive, and then—!

(*Several caciques enter at Back.* CUITLAHUA *moves up toward the screen while* GUATAMOZIN *and* HUTEPEC *retire to Left, and stand in attendance.*

Meanwhile, crowds of caciques and courtiers enter

from all sides amid low murmur, all clothed in the "nequem" or quilted cloak of homage. The rhythmic sound of conches are heard, Off Left, when finally AYOTAC, *the Chief Usher, with his staff of office, steps in at Back and stands for a moment where everyone can see him, waiting for the court to quiet down.)*

AYOTAC (*in great form*):

The Emperor!

(*At the same time everybody at Back retires Right and Left. After a short pause,* MAXTLA, *the Chief of the Guard, enters, resplendent with silver armor and helmet, decorated with waving plumes of green and white. He is followed by six members of the Guards, in the same uniform. They line up on either side of the doorway.*

Almost instantly, with the exception of the Guards, who hang their heads, everyone in the hall falls on his knees, bows his head forward, and gives the Aztec salute of homage. Amid this pomp, MONTEZUMA *enters, clothed in green robes, covered with jewels. On his head, of long raven black hair, is a curious tiara of feather-work, called a "copilli," and sprinkled with all kinds of jewels. He is a slow-moving, reflective man of about forty years, with a rather sad, pale countenance, even for an Indian. He shows in his person the influence of exquisite luxury, even to the point of degeneracy, with a pair of eyes that gaze nowhere in particular, but denoting in them a poignant solitude and introspection for the deeper mysteries of life. He is followed, at some distance, by* CACAMA, *the young Prince of Texcuco;* TETEPANQUEZAL, *Prince of Tacuba;* CIHUACA, TCALAC, MECAMECA, *along with several other aged counsellors. The two Princes follow* MONTEZUMA *nearly up the cushioned seat at Right,*

where his brother, CUITLAHUA, *holding his arm, helps him to sit down, assuming a semi-reclining attitude.*

CIHUACA *and the other counsellors move solemnly to the Left, where* GUATAMOZIN *and* HUTEPEC *are waiting in attendance. The Princes,* CACAMA *and* TETEPANQUEZAL, *bow their way back to this group, keeping their faces toward* MONTEZUMA.

Everyone, now, rises to his feet and stands with bowed head. MAXTLA *and the six Guards line themselves up at Back.*

TAPIA, *at Center, rings a little bell, which he constantly carries about with him, and from behind the screen, at Upper Right, several pretty Indian girls, members of* MONTEZUMA'S *harem, enter, each carrying a different article for ablution. He dips his fingers lightly in a silver basin, which one girl presents him on her knees. Another gives him a fine linen cloth, with which he wipes his hands. Still another, some small article, with which to perfume the tips of his fingers. After which the girls retire as noiselessly as they had entered. During all this formality, the rhythm of the conches are heard.*

Once more TAPIA *rings his little bell, and a half-dozen young caciques, in waiting, quickly respond.* TAPIA *hands* MONTEZUMA *a gold-tipped pointer, and the latter indicates a few of the many dishes laid out before him. He hands back the pointer to* TAPIA, *and the youths in attendance wait on him. He starts his meal without a word, everything, so far, having been carried out in specified order.*

(*The music, at this point, is gradually lowered, while the people on the scene remain standing amid awed silence.*)

MONTEZUMA (*finally looking up, languidly, and addressing the group of aged caciques, at Left*)—

I feel in better health this evening, uncles.

(*Pausing, while they remain silent.*)

No doubt, because my star has risen!

(*Meditating*)—

Surely,—
Else pierced the mists that have long clouded it.

(*Pausing again and meditating*)—

Should we complain, when circumstances leap
The powers of nature? Yet more just, it seems,
That if the gods chose to afflict us with
So many sorrows, they, in turn, should have
Bestowed on us the power to assuage them.

TCALAC:

Ah, but a King should be above all sorrow!
His crown should charm away ill-fortune, as
Our cloaks protect us from the storms of nature.

MONTEZUMA (*pausing, as he dines*):

Ay, but, ofttimes, the crown does not protect;
It is, itself, the trouble.

(*As with sudden recollection, he quietly lays down his gold cup of "chocotatle," and beckons mysteriously toward the group, at Left*)—Uncles, come
A little nearer!

(*They approach him with great reverence, while* MONTEZUMA, *on his cushion, leans toward them, speaking in a subdued undertone*)—

I am somewhat troubled!
A courier just informs me that these men

Have left the coast and marched to Zempoalla.
The embassy will best inform us, still
Tell me, in your frank mind, who are these people?
(*Mysteriously*)—
What unknown land is there beyond the sea,
From which these creatures come?

MECAMECA:

Oh, Sire, can
We prophecy where your own wisdom speaks?

TCALAC:

We take your word, Sire, and beyond
That, there is nothing!

MONTEZUMA (*firing with anger*):

Do you call those answers?
Why, my poor fools could serve me better!
(*Coaxingly, addressing another*)—
—Come,
Cihuaca, you are not known to flatter.
Speak from your heart, uncle! Who are these people?

CIHUACA (*in trembling tones*):

Oh, Sire, could I prophecy, I would
Not hesitate to inform you. They seem strange,
And time, alone, will solve their being. They
Have come like tokens of a destiny;
They rise, in a night, like gods, out of the sea,
Even as dawn out of the gilded ocean!
You ask me, Sire?
(*Pausing*)—They seem like *Gods*
On a brief passage from Tlapallan!

MONTEZUMA (*following a long, superstitious silence*):

Ay,—so they *seem!*

CIHUACA (*cheerily*):

But, Sire, we should wait,—
And surely, till the embassy arrives.

MONTEZUMA (*with unreverted gaze, in the throes of superstitious belief*):

Oh, do we rule, the masters of an hour,
To prove, at length, the slaves of Destiny?
(*After a pause, in despair*)—
Why do they come? What is their purpose, then?
Is it Tenochtitlan? Is it its riches?
Ah, what are these to gods, my father's jewels
Beside the jewels of Heaven?
(*Repeating with vexation*)—Why do they come,—
Even as Quetzal said he might return
To mark the finger of the ages, and,
Withal, to cast a ruin over Aztlan.
(*Striking his breast*)—
But why have *I* been chosen? What sad plight
That Fate should speak to *me?* What is *my* crime,
Uncles, when you know best how I have ruled you;
How I have built an Empire out of Aztlan,
That now the valley blossoms, where before
A wilderness was stretched about us! Did
We not conquer the southern tribes, far down
As the two seas,—ay, from Palenque, north,
To the deep canyons of the wild Apaches?
Do then the gods complain for myriads
Of prostrate hearts that we have cast before them?
Is that then no devotion? Where is justice,
If the Heavens have no justice, that the gods

Are bent on our destruction? Is then Aztlan
So poor a land that Quetzal seeks to thrust
It back, once more, into a wilderness?
Oh, I would rather die than that to happen!
Yet who are these? They come on what presumption?
(*Staring about him with impatience*)—
Where is the embassy, Tapia?

TAPIA (*obsequiously*):

Sire,
They will be here this evening. They are now
On their way from Cholula.

CIHUACA (*to* MONTEZUMA, *with admonition*):

Noble Master,
Does not the fancy, sometime, lead to grief,
When, in the fact, there is no cause for it?

MONTEZUMA:

Cihuaca, fact will not solve the future.
Too fair a day is presage of the storm
To-morrow, as the storm, in turn, will clear,
To unfold a fresher beauty to the world.

GUATAMOZIN (*stepping, impulsively, out of the group at Left*):

But, Sire!—

MONTEZUMA (*startled out of his reflection*):

How now, Guatamo!

GUATAMOZIN (*boldly*):

You *believe*
These men are gods! I say, order your army,
Sire! Cross the steep passes, and before

These gods have wakened, sleeping as the mind
Will sleep after the day's toil,—fall on them,
While the grey sleep of their own destiny
Blinds them from their weapons! Ah, it is then
We turn the fates on them, and we shall see
That they, in turn, will lift their hands to Heaven,
And curse the Fate that brought them here!

(*A murmur of approval rises all over the hall.*)

MONTEZUMA (*skeptically, as he rivets Guatamozin with his gaze*):

Ah, so?
Even the gods, sometimes, are known to fail,—
The powers of nature have been known to fail,—
But is it likely—in this instant?

GUATAMOZIN (*enthusiastically*):

If
We grasp our moment, Sire!

MONTEZUMA (*with a smile of disapproval*):

Guatamozin,
Season the mind that would suggest such things!
(*After a pause of reflection*)—
If they are strangers, merely, come to trade,
Or even warriors, bent on conquest, we
Have still the riches of Tenochtitlan.
(*Lowering his voice*)—
If they are gods, and Quetzal so decrees,—
And my best treasures cannot hold them, shall
We face the winds of nature?—shall we laugh
At death itself,—or think to prove ourselves
Impregnable?

(*Addressing* TAPIA, *with a sigh of fatigue*)—

Come, let the dancers enter!

(TAPIA *rings his little bell, and the weird Indian music is started anew by the musicians behind the screen.*

The Guards, at Back, under MAXTLA'S *orders, form two columns on either side of the main entrances, Back, when a number of Indian girls, lightly clad, with beautiful plumes in their hair, enter in the form of a ballet.*

In the meantime TAPIA *hands over a pipe, richly gilt, to* MONTEZUMA, *who smokes in brooding silence, lounging back on his divan, abstractedly watching the sinuous movements of the dancers as they rise and fall to the voluptuous cadences of the music.*

CUITLAHUA *has seated himself down beside him, also smoking, while, at a signal, and very silently, all the caciques, across the hall, seat themselves, cross-legged, while serving-men pass pipes about them. They remain in this posture, watching, silently and restfully, the variations of the dance, while the smoke of their pipes winds itself slowly toward the cedar ceiling of the hall.*

Finally, the Indian girls retire, the weird music is lowered, and the scene, for the time, becomes an immobile tableau, except for the pipe-smoke winding its delicate spirals toward the ceiling. For a long while MONTEZUMA *remains with his gaze far off, as though lost in the cloud of his dreams.*

At last AYOTAC, *the chief usher, enters. He approaches* MONTEZUMA *a few paces and prostrates himself, remaining so for some time, till* MONTEZUMA, *realizing his presence, turns to him in kindly manner.*)

MONTEZUMA:

Well, Ayotac?—

AYOTAC (*remaining on his knees, as he lifts his head*):

Oh, Sire, Lord Iztlil craves——

MONTEZUMA (*interrupting him, as he addresses, benignly, the caciques across the hall*):

Yes, uncles, this I promised him. He has
Been seldom here, since we bestowed on our
Young lord, Cacama, what we felt was just.
His father was my friend, and to his Spirit,
Even in quarrel,—he remains his son.

(*To* AYOTAC):

Tell him we should be glad to see him.

(*Exit* AYOTAC, *Off Left, backing to the door.*)

MONTEZUMA (*resuming in the same tone*):

Yes,
What has seemed strange that sons of Huahpilli,
My dearest friend and counsellor, should not
Abide by our decision. Where he cared
For peace, his son seeks discontent in war.

(*Addressing* CACAMA):

Cacama, you knew best your father's wishes.
Did he not live, preaching that policy,
Where there is justice, is the cure for evil?

CACAMA:

Peace, Sire, was my father's chief desire.

MONTEZUMA (*nodding his head*):

Some say your brother's claim was better,—still,—

(*Pause*)

Oh, how I wish there had been two Texcucos!

TCALAC:

My Master, we agreed on your decision.
The citizens, themselves, bowed to your justice.

MONTEZUMA (*in scorn*):

They? Ha! What are they but the beasts of nature?
Had I bestowed on Iztlil their fair city,
They would have bowed the same. Justice, you say?

(*Shrewdly*):

Where I have won Cacama, I have lost
An *arm*, that might have served me sometime!

(*He puffs his pipe calmly, when* AYOTAC *re-enters, bowing at the door.* IZTLIL *enters with evident pride. He hesitates a moment on the threshold and then comes down, starts to bend the knee in cold formality, when* MONTEZUMA, *graciously, raises his hand.*)

MONTEZUMA:

So?

Lord Iztlil, let it pass.—I have not
Forgot you are the son of one who stood
Most near to me, while as for you, my boy,
Tlascala is not without just cause.
In fearing you.

IZTLIL (*guardedly*):

The Tlascalans, Sire, are
Our common enemy.

MONTEZUMA (*with a grim smile*):

They make good victims!
By Heaven's light, what would we do without them?

IZTLIL:

I leave that to the gods, Sire.

MONTEZUMA (*smiling quizzically*):

You are not
A priest?

IZTLIL:

I worship, Sire.

MONTEZUMA:

Nor even a scholar?

IZTLIL:

I studied at the Calmecac, Sire.

MONTEZUMA (*with subtle flattery*):

Ah,—
But you have led an *army!*

IZTLIL (*bursting with pride*):

That I have!

MONTEZUMA (*shaking his head with a smile*):

Ah, I was proud of you, my son! Shall I
Repeat what the great chiefs informed me?

IZTLIL (*suspiciously*):

Sire,
Too often.

MONTEZUMA (*soothingly*):

No, they praised you,—praised your spirit,
My son, and that is why Tlascala
Has every reason to be fearful of you.

(Instinctively, IZTLIL *straightens with conceit, while the Emperor leans back quietly, half closing his eyes, to contemplate him through the dream-clouds of his pipe.)*

MONTEZUMA (*after a pause, suavely*):

It grieved me that you thought I was unjust,
When I needs granted to an elder son,
Your father's city.—That, at least, was brought me.—
But I believe all men have their detractors,
While, in my heart, I have not yet forgot
The service you have rendered to the gods.
So, if you come with reasonable demand,
Be pleased to ask it. I, in turn, will serve you!

IZTLIL:

What has distressed me more, Sire, is that
My enemies should creep into your Palace,
And wrong me where I cannot answer.

MONTEZUMA (*feigning great surprise*):

So?

IZTLIL:

I do not come here to defend myself.

MONTEZUMA (*dryly*):

Nor did I ask that of you.

IZTLIL (*boldly*):

Even to hide
The truth, Sire! I am my father's son,
And if they say that I condemned your judgment,
It must be, then,—that they spoke truly!

MONTEZUMA (*with a frown*):

Ah?

IZTLIL (*half apologetically*):

I wish to be respectful, Sire, but there
Is not, in your whole land, a flower more fair,
A privilege, more nobly granted, than speech
That springs from honest grievance! I was hurt,
Not that you gave Texcuco to my brother,
Nor that you gave me barren hills, without
So much as a wolf's shelter. I have slept,
With my warriors, on the stony peaks
Of mountains; on the grassy plains, with Heaven,
Itself, and the stars, my only coverlet!
It is the freedom of my *father's city,*
The will to act upon my own desires!

(*Restraining his emotions*)

Ah, when my father led his retinue
Out of Texcuco, to be seated here
In honored council, did you ask him, then,
To wrap his robes in a slave's tunic,—even
To cast a shame on his traditions?

MONTEZUMA (*starting out of his seat and glowering at* IZTLIL):

Gods!

Can, then, rebellion be so bold?

IZTLIL (*unflinchingly*):

No, Sire,

I mean to be respectful, yet I seek
To assert my only justice,—in your presence
To sue for peace and friendship.

MONTEZUMA (*sarcastically*):

Does the son
Of my dear friend forget, that I have right
Of making peace without such bargains?

IZTLIL (*subtly*):

Sire,
You sway the forces of Anahuac!
Your name is Aztlan, and your slightest word
Can strike dumb terror in the hearts of millions,—
Yet, it is soon, you may have need of me,
When time will bring the White Men to your shores,
And other customs rule the Aztlan nations,
And other gods displace the gods of fame,
And kingly splendor, like a silent shadow,
Is lost in the dim memories of time!

MONTEZUMA (*trembling*):

Why?—Why?

IZTLIL (*with a triumphant smile*):

Because you will have need of *warriors!*

MONTEZUMA (*superstitiously*):

Ah?
You think the White Men will achieve these things?

IZTLIL:

Oh, who shall say, Sire? They rule a force
Beyond the understanding,—far beyond.—

MONTEZUMA (*vexatiously*):

It may be! Gods, let it rest a while!
(*Hopelessly, as he shakes his head*)

It is not in my hand to rule the stars,
Nor cast a mist over the silent seas,—
Nor, even to drive the White Men from our shores.

IZTLIL:

Yet, Sire, should we let Fate be master, where
Our wills, combined, can check a common peril?
I am myself, of royal blood, and as a prince
To lead your armies, I have come to seek
A blest alliance with your house.

(*Montezuma looks up in surprise.*)

I mean
That in a marriage with your daughter, I
Would link my fortune to the death with yours!

(GUATAMOZIN, *sitting the while, smoking liesurely among the caciques at Left, is heard to crash his pipe on the floor.* MONTEZUMA, *for a long time, reverts to his introspection.*)

MONTEZUMA (*finally, with apparent indifference*):
Which one, noble cacique, of my young daughters,
Has found this favor in your eyes?

IZTLIL:

Oh, Sire, are they not all most beautiful?
Yet there is truly one among them, where
The spirit lingers; in whose eyes are shown
Her father's mysteries; in whose heart, the charm
Of silent revery is deep and pure!

MONTEZUMA (*faintly*):
Tecuichpo?

IZTLIL (*assenting, with a bow*):
Sire!—

(GUATAMOZIN *is seen to rise, quietly, at Left.*)

MONTEZUMA (*softly*):

She is dear to me,
Dearer than any city!—Ah, in truth,
She is my temple, and the mist of dreams
Wherein the beauty of the world is seen,—
Yet, after all, I am her father!

(*Suddenly knitting his brows, as he looks up*):

You
Have known her—for how long?

IZTLIL:

We had known
Each other as mere children, Sire.

MONTEZUMA (*as he finally nods and smiles*):

Ah, well!
Are you not still the son of Hualpilli?
And if the gods are willing—

(*Turning his head, suddenly, with a scowl*)—

Ah!—Gautamo!

(IZTLIL *steps back quickly and sees* GUATAMOZIN *directly behind him. Several caciques are supporting* GUATAMOZIN, *while a slight commotion rules in the hall.*)

GUATAMOZIN (*to* IZTLIL, *with quiet disdain*):

You tell us of your enemies, who creep
Into the palace to defame your honor!

(*As he clenches his fists and raises his voice*)

By the high hand of Huitzil, has, indeed,
Nobility sunk to this level, that
You come here on the grievance of lost city,
To ask the hand of one, you know,—detests you?

IZTLIL (*indifferently*):

That is your word, noble tzin!

MONTEZUMA (*to* GUATAMOZIN):

And have *you*
The claims, my boy, that sons of Hualpilli
Bore before you?

GUATAMOZIN:

Ah, it is policy
You speak of, Sire—*policy?* But has
The daughter, even of an Emperor, not
The right to question?

MONTEZUMA (*with low threat*):

Careful!—

GUATAMOZIN:

By my Fathers,
If your own kin become so cheap.

MONTEZUMA (*warningly*):

Take care!—

GUATAMOZIN (*with injured pride*):

Then give your armies to his guidance! He
Will frighten the gods back to Tlapallan!

(*A murmur is heard Off Left, which instantly grows louder. Stung by* GUATAMOZIN'S *rebuke, a wave of terror sweeps over* MONTEZUMA'S *face at this sudden murmur.*)

MONTEZUMA:

What is that?—

(*Calling*):

Ayotac!—

(*Enter* AYOTAC, *hurriedly.* IZTLIL *and* GUATAMOZIN *step to one side.*)

AYOTAC:

The embassy,
Sire, with Lord Sonocac!

MONTEZUMA (*with joyful expectancy*):

Then we shall know
The truth, at last!

(*Enter, at Back,* SONOCAC, *the Imperial Ambassador, with the* SECOND AMBASSADOR, *followed by other caciques. They enter and bow to the ground.*)

MONTEZUMA (*as they enter*):

Ah, welcome, Sonocaç!
What are the tidings that you bring?—If they
Are men or gods, why have they come unbidden?
What is their purpose?—Is it war or peace?

SONOCAC (*rising to his feet, and narrating with imaginative fervor*):

Ay, we have seen their faces, Mighty Sire!
Their features, paler—with dark beards that hang
On silver breasts!—and, we beheld the fire
Dart from their eyes, even as when they struck
Two stones, like that—

(*With an imitation of striking flint*)

—and touched, with them, long tubes,
Of some strange metal, when, at once, oh Sire,
Though Heaven itself was clear, the forests crashed,

And thick, dark clouds arose to dim the skies!
And while we waited, bound in wonderment,
That thunder could be ruled by mortal man,
A roar arose—a tramp, and as we turned,
A troop of howling demons swept before us,
Half man, half beast,

(*Lowering his tone, while the veil of superstition falls on* MONTEZUMA)

—and it was then
My heart foretold me that these beings *must*
Be gods, or, if not gods, in league with Death,
For so Death sweeps over the multitude,
When the foul plague is on us!

MONTEZUMA (*finally raising his hand in an effort to speak*):

You have brought
Some pictures?

SECOND AMBASSADOR (*stepping forward and handing some paper rolls to* MONTEZUMA):

Sire, they are badly done,
As they are figures, new and strange.

MONTEZUMA (*as he takes them*):

Ah, well.—

(*Examining the colored drawings, known as picture-writing*)—

So?—They *are* strange!
(*Reminiscently*)—Once, on a Toltec wall,
I saw inscribed some images like these.
(*Smilingly, as he examines another drawing*)—
And these are they, half man, half beast?

(*Shaking his head incredulously*)—While yet,
In height and features, they might still be human.—
They are, indeed, strange beings!
(*Examining a third drawing and finally speaking*)—
But Malinche?—
Is he not here? Did you not speak to him,—
Hand him my gifts,—and was he pleased with them?

SONOCAC (*handing* MONTEZUMA *a string of cheap glass beads*):
Sire,
He thanked you many times,—and sent you these.

MONTEZUMA (*holding the glass beads up to the light, and with a smile, laying them down at his side*):
And so he thanked me? Ah, and did you say
He must not come to see me.

SONOCAC:
So I told him.
Through a young woman, whom they call Marina,
Of a Tabascan lineage,
(*Shrugging his shoulders*)
—how or where
He came by her,—upon my words to know
What was his mission, raised his hand and said,
(*Pointing Off*)
"I come from a great King, across the sea,—a monarch,
Who rules an Empire over scattered nations,"
And having heard of you, Sire, has sent
Malinche to bear his fond regard.

MONTEZUMA:
To which
You said—

SONOCAC:

At once the Governor Teuhtlile
Replied, "Malinche, you have been here two days,
Yet you have asked to see the Emperor!"
Whereon, I added, "It will give him pleasure
To hear of this great monarch, and, in turn,
Will feel a deep regard—but to receive
His Messenger,—would be beyond all question!

MONTEZUMA:

And did you leave him so?

SONOCAC:

No, then he smiled—
And gave me this.
(*Handing* MONTEZUMA *a small silver cross.*)

MONTEZUMA (*interestedly, as he examines the cross*):

The Sign of Tlaloc!

SONOCAC (*handing him another article*):

Also this image.

MONTEZUMA (*gazing at the article whimsically*):

Ah?—A mother and child!
It seems well carven,—but what led to this?

SONOCAC (*in nervous narration*):

No sooner had he done so than a bell
Rung forth, and in the shifting sands, near by,
They raised a wooden symbol, such as that,—
When all the White Men, thrusting off their casques,
Knelt down to pray.

MONTEZUMA (*with sudden suspicion*):
To pray?

SONOCAC:
And then a priest
Loudly exclaimed of the great God, of Christ,
His Son, the Virgin Mother, who had borne him,
And other precepts of their gods.

MONTEZUMA (*indignantly*):
Is that
The message that he brings me? In this age,
To come so far, and preach of *my* Hereafter!
(*Derisively.*)
You say they fell upon their knees to pray?
(*Shaking his head doubtfully, after a pause of meditation.*)
Gods never pray! Only a mortal prays,
When he is bowed by the deep mysteries.

(*The frantic cry of an old man is heard in the distance, shrieking "Woe! Woe!" A wave of superstitious awe sweeps over the hall, while* MONTEZUMA, *at first sinking back, gradually rises to his feet, at about the time that* MUALOX, *the mad priest of Quetzal, makes a spectacular entrance at Back, his robes in absolute disorder, his hair, dishevelled, and the glow of insanity in his eyes.*)

MUALOX (*with a fiendish cry, on the threshold*):
Woe on Tenochtitlan! Woe unto you,
Oh King, that you should bring this pass on Aztlan!

(*Those near him, step out of the way, while* MONTEZUMA *turns, pale and trembling, toward the priest.*)

MONTEZUMA:

You, Mualox! What mad phantasy.

MUALOX (*triumphantly*):

Oh, Sire,
Quetzal is here!

MONTEZUMA:

Where, priest?

MAULOX:

The voice has spoken!—
The stars have shed their tears on Aztlan!

MONTEZUMA:

Where?
Humph, in your fancy, Paba!

MUALOX (*coming down, and lowering his voice mysteriously*):

You are blind,
Sire, while I pierce the mists of nature! It
Was so the eyes of Quetzal shone upon
Me from the deep horizon,—aye, two eyes,
Where vengeance shone!

MONTEZUMA (*tremulously*):

And for what cause, I pray,
Should Quetzal come? I am afraid, mad priest,
This a dream that has enslaved your senses.

MUALOX (*crossing his arms*):

Ah, Mighty King, you doubt the word of Quetzal?
(*Shaking his head.*)
That is the malady of sin, that in

The sinning we should lose ourselves, so when
The retribution comes, we ask, "What cause?"

MONTEZUMA:

Is not the country fair? Are we not happy?
Where are the triumphs, then, of a hundred nations?

MUALOX (*with a cold, fixed stare*):

While foreign tribes rebel and your own people
Gaze back upon the Toltec dynasties,
When kings were *men!*

MONTEZUMA (*flushing with anger*):

Why should they so, by Mictlan!

MUALOX (*with disdain*):

Ah, you believe the *god* has not beheld you,
King of Women? You cast me from your throne;
Called me the priest of some mad vision. Now,
The *god* has spoken!

(*Leaning forward and shaking a long, bony finger at him.*)

So gaze back, proud Sire,
And think of the young girls, clutched by the demon!
Have they not come from furtherest domains,
Dragged in the net, as fishes from the sea?
Oh, who shall pay for such a sacrilege?

(*Shaking his hand at him.*)

Woe unto you! Woe on Tenochtitlan!
The vengeance of the god has spoken!

MONTEZUMA (*with a sad smile*):

Priest,
The sanctuary cannot lead to Heaven,

Nor prayers, nor mummeries unfold the light,
That one brief moment of a love can give!
Oh, we should not be guided by the *dreams*
Of nature! At such times, the heart is prone
To catch the evil of things in the great laws—
This life, Paba, is pitiable or sublime,
In just proportion as the *mind* conceives.
The Omen speaks, but the Fair God is kind.
I do not think that I have smirched my *heart,*
While, at its worst, He would forgive
So proud a sin,

(*Stretching his arms above him*)

—so beautiful a crime!!

(*Just then a light murmur is heard Off, growing in intensity. With superstitious awe,* MONTEZUMA *turns* to the door, while MUALOX, *with insanity still marked in his eyes, remains immovable at Center.*)

MUALOX (*in a deep undertone*):

You hear, oh King! It is the voice of Quetzal!

(*Great consternation rules in the corridors of the Palace, with cries of "Make way! Make way!" when, suddenly, a half-naked courier, with black trappings, lunges in from Back, and staggering to the Center of the Hall, falls prostrate at* MONTEZUMA'S *feet, while* TAPIA *and others rush to his aid.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with terror-stricken gaze*):

Lift him! Lift him, Tapia!

(*The Courier, helped up from the floor, makes a frantic effort to speak. He opens his blood-shot eyes and points Off.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in despair*):

Where, slave,—*where?*

COURIER (*with supreme effort*):

Tlascala!

(*Panting frantically.*)

Malinche has swept their army!
He is a god, Master,—a *god!*

MONTEZUMA:

Speak, slave!
Could they not hold him from their city?

COURIER:

Sire,
He calls the thunder and it comes! He calls—

(*With a frantic effort to speak further, he falls forward on his face and loses consciousness.*)

MONTEZUMA (*as half to himself, with the gaze of a hunted animal over the prostrate body of the Courier*):

Their ancient army swept like maize in the field!

(*Rising out of himself and turning nervously to his group of counsellors.*)

Here, Tcalac! Go, tell him he must not
Conspire with the Tlascalans, for then,
Indeed, Anahuac would fall!

(*Gazing bewilderedly about him.*)

Take all!—

(*Snatching off his copilli.*)

The very jewels of this crown, and lay
Them all before him! Tell him to go back!

ACT II

SCENE 1

SCENE—*The Azotea of the Cû or Temple of Quetzal.*

It forms the roof of the Temple, with the sanctuary of the god at Left, out of which, through the curiosly carved door-way, a dim purple light gleams over the stage. The sacred fire of Quetzal is burning in the tower, above the sanctuary. A flight of stairs, leading down to the courtyard of the Temple, Upper Left.

It is a moonlit night, with swift, troubled clouds in the sky. Beyond the stone parapet of the azotea is discerned the other high conical temples of the city, with their respective fires; and, looming above all, the huge square Temple of Huitzil, with its flights of stairs and tapering platforms, on the top of which, also, the undying fires proclaim the Imnipotence of Montezuma's War-God.

Off Right, beyond the white city, sleeping in the faint light of the moon, are discerned the shimmering lakes of Texcuco and Chalco, and further, still, the peaks with their snow-covered tops, unfolding, between, the rich valley of Anahuac, spotted with innumerable towns.

(*As the curtain rises, the reiterated moan of the priests is heard from the different temples about the city, and, almost immediately,* YOLO, *the 1st Priest of Quetzal, assisted by the 2nd Priest, approach a large suspended gong at Back, which they strike with their whole might. Instantly, the gongs and cymbals of the other temples respond. During this usual midnight ceremony,* MUALOX *is standing pensively at Upper Right, gazing off over the valley toward the East, while the figure of* GUATAMOZIN *is discovered, seated*

on a stone bench, at Center, leaning forward on his arms in thought. He is wrapped in a long cloak of feather-work, with a wreath of plumes about his brow. The two retain these postures for sometime, till, at last, the echoes of the gongs have died away and silence, again, rests on the scene. YOLO *starts noiselessly for the stairs, Upper Left, when* MUALOX *turns.)*

MUALOX (*in a subdued voice, to* YOLO):

Yolo,—wait in the courtyard. If you see
A silent figure passing, you will know
It is the Emperor. I shall be yonder,
(*With an admonishing gesture*)
And when he comes, see that you beckon to me!,

YOLO (*bowing respectfully*):

Yes, Father.—
(*Exit* YOLO *by the stairs, Upper Left, followed by the* 2ND PRIEST.)

GUATAMOZIN (*after a pause, as he looks up at* MUALOX):

And to what end? Because the god has spoken?

MUALOX:

My son, we come from the great Wilderness;
We speed over the valleys of the World;
We halt to taste their bounty for a time—
Then pass beyond—to other lands and climes.
'Tis so we reach the brink of a dark chasm,
The deep and silent canyon of the Dead!
(*Raising his voice.*)
What are we all but slaves of Destiny?

Is weakness not calamity? Is strength,
No cause for being? Why do nations perish?
Ah, for the worms that lie in their traditions!

(*With a gesture Off.*)

Look out, my son, over this fruitful valley!

(*With a deep breath.*)

Even from here we breathe the flowered chinampas,
From here, the cool, fresh breezes of Ahualco!

(*Lowering his voice.*)

Yet in the roses of Anahuac,
The worm is gnawing at the heart of Nature!
The hand of Fate has fallen, and, at length,
From the great Wilderness, another people
Will sweep over this land of sorrow. Ah,
Others have gone before; others will come,
And to bemoan the course of Life itself,
Where even *nations* perish, what are *we*—
To cry against that Destiny?

GUATAMOZIN:

Yes, Father,
So meditation proves my blessing, yet
Many there are, who note in study much
Less truth than treachery!

MUALOX (*with a smile*):

Are you so weak,
Guatamo, that you shrink at envy? There
Are serpents everywhere, thirsting for power,
Noting your thought as treachery because
They are, themselves, the slaves of evil.
I taught you how to bear with solitude,
With Quetzal in your heart, to be above
Even an Emperor's envy; to guard well

Against the woes of Mictlan; to be proud,
And bear misfortune with a smile. Oh 'tzin,
That is the strength of Quetzal—and his blessing!

GUATAMOZIN (*sadly*):

But what is gone, is *gone!*

MUALOX (*pacing up to him quietly, and laying his hand on his shoulder*):

All for a woman,
Guatamo! Let her pass to the Texcucan!
Is then a woman your whole heart, Guatamo?
Ah, look beyond her—at the Nation! See
Anahuac the prize of foreign conquest,
Peopled with strangers, loud in some strange tongue,
Your Emperor in chains, your Dynasty
Written upon the fading twilight, *you,*
The clinging sunbeam of Anahuac!
Oh 'tzin, what is a woman—to a fate
So beautiful?

GUATAMOZIN:

Father, it is not so much
That she is taken from me, as the shame,
That serves a coward's policy!

MUALOX:

My son,
Where Destiny awaits you, what is shame?
A Destiny, where you will smile on death?
Ah, where nobility is proud, is there
Such thing as shame? It is the little mind
That fears rebuke, noting its small resources,
Wherein the pride of man is broken!

(*Listening suddenly over his shoulder*)

Ssh!

(*He steps back hurriedly and glances down the stair-way, returning instantly.*)

MUALOX (*in a low voice, indicating the sanctuary at Left*):

Stay, for the while, in there! The Emperor should
Not see you. Go!

(*Exit* GUATAMOZIN, *Left.* MUALOX, *with crossed arms, plants himself before the door, with the purple light of the sanctuary shining behind him. A pause ensues, when a shuffle is heard, and* MONTEZUMA *enters by the stair-way at Upper Left. He is wrapped in a long cloak, which hides, as well, the lower half of his face. Not noticing* MUALOX *at first, he paces meditatively to Center, where, turning, he discovers* MUALOX *for the first time, standing, like an idol, guarding the entrance to the sanctuary.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with contemptuous reserve, as though startled out of his revery, while, at the same time, slightly unloosening his mantle*):

Priest, if the stars denote some mystery
To-night, unfold them; if, in truth, you hold
Some presage of the gods, oh, cast away
The clouds, and let us peer into the future!

(*In the East, Off Upper Right, a red glow is just beginning to be seen over the mountains.*)

MUALOX:

The stars of Heaven, Sire, come and go,
Teaching the universe their lesson; as
The tribes have come to build their separate nations,
Only to fall, when destiny decrees;
As Kings, who sway their people for a day,
Are Time's own creatures!

MONTEZUMA (*flaming with anger*):

Gods,—is this your answer?

MUALOX (*triumphantly, as he calmly lifts his hand and points Off Right*):

Sire, look behind you!

(MONTEZUMA *turns and starts as he beholds the red glow in the sky, becoming, now, brighter and brighter.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in wonderment*):

Ah!—

MUALOX (*calmly*):

At Cholula,
Now, Quetzal wrecks his vengeance!

MONTEZUMA (*gazing Off*):

Did you say
Quetzal?—Is that the light of Quetzal, there?

MUALOX:

He comes to sweep over your Empire!—Ay,—
And, in good time, will reach Ithualco.

(*After an ominous pause.*)

Listen!—The very breeze is fraught with woe,
While distant winds foretell the fate of Aztlan!

MONTEZUMA (*with poignant grief, as he still gazes off toward Cholula*):

Oh, what have I done, Paba, that the fates
Should be unkind,—what crime, that *I* should suffer?

MAULOX:

Pride, Sire!—

MONTEZUMA (*facing about*):

Pride?—

MUALOX (*bitterly*):

Have you not scoffed at Quetzal?
In conquering the tribes, did you not bow
Each one to grief? Ah, then, you cast me off,
And reared above me, here, the rites of Huitzil.
You thrust me here, in shadow, while the shrieks
Of sacrifice were borne upon me, with
The hearts of children, prostrate on your altars!
Woe, for no monarch is so cruel, Sire,
But what the laws of life will crush him soon,
And Death, itself, ravage his Empire!

MONTEZUMA (*reflectively*):

Ah, pride?—What is the quest of life, but pride?

MUALOX (*exclaiming*):

Yet who shall note the suffering of slaves?
The proud man says, "Oh, I shall build so high,
That it will hide the sun,—and then the world
Shall gape in wonderment at such achievement!"

(*Shaking his finger.*)

Ah, but the gods, who do not care for pride
Or for mere petty praise, bade Nature shine
Over the seeds of Life, the simple harvests,
Springing from the rich loam of the fields, the flowers.
Unfolding beauty in their tender buds;
The *child,* God's sweet creation, yet a task
Which is the simple course of Nature.

(*Raising his voice, as he indicates the temples above him.*)

Still

We see the monstrous pride of man continue,
Rearing his temples to the sky! Behold,
You dream of pride, yet tread upon a worm,
Crushing, in that, a mystery more perfect,
Than all the splendors of Tenochtitlan!

MONTEZUMA (*contemptuously*):

Why are we Kings, Paba, but in our rights
Over the rest of Nature; and nobler yet,
In bearing burdens that the people cannot?
Are we not proud? Are we not justly noble,
To cast aside the filth of Nature, raise
Our hands aloft to some fair image, strive
To be more perfect! Would you, then, compare me
To the mud-smeared potters of Cholula? Am
I then so base that I must concourse with
The fishermen of Chalco?

(*With indignation.*)

Who am *I*
That I must bear my head before your god,
And mingle with his worshippers,—*I*, who
Have built an *Empire!*

(*A strange murmur suddenly rises all over the city, becoming louder and louder. A momentous pause ensues between Priest and Emperor.*)

MUALOX (*fanatically*):

Quetzal answers you!
You cannot question the Great Spirit, Sire,
Nor doubt the Flame of God!

(*The approaching cries of the priests are heard, as they rush up the stairs.*)

YOLO (*Off*):

Oh, Father, Father!

(*Re-enter* YOLO *and the* 2ND PRIEST, *hurriedly.*)

YOLO (*excitedly*):

Cholula is in flames, the Temple burning,
While people, here, cry that the god has come.
(*The murmur in the city continues.*)

MONTEZUMA (*overwhelmed*):

A god who tears his temples down,—for what?

MUALOX:

Ah, Sire, in the punishment of all
He bears his own, while on the desert waste
There will arise new cities and new temples—
And Quetzal will still rule to light the world!

MONTEZUMA:

Oh, then it is a truth beyond the mind!
He speaks of sweet humility, and yet
He comes for conquest as his purpose.
What are we, then, to do with this Malinche,—
Whether a god or no?
(*Turning about abruptly to descend.*)
Ah, we shall wait,—
And then, by Mictlan——!

(GAUTAMOZIN *emerges from the sanctuary and faces* MONTEZUMA, *just as the latter is about to descend. The two remain motionless, eyeing each other for sometime in silence.*)

GUATAMOZIN:

Sire,—
(*After a strained pause*)
give me leave
To lead the army!

MONTEZUMA (*with disdain*):

You?—

GUATAMOZIN:

Before Malinche
Can reach Ithualco! There we shall force
Him in the narrow passes, where his thunder
Will serve for nothing. There the way is steep
And the high sides, ragged with cliffs. Oh, we
Shall test him then, Sire—we shall know!

MONTEZUMA (*contemplating him*):

Go, boy,
And learn the lesson of your fathers!—Ay!—
Has not the god declared himself? What more?
When it is time to see Malinche, then *I*
Shall see him!

GUATAMOZIN:

When it is too late!

MONTEZUMA (*scornfully*):

Too late?

GUATAMOZIN (*in a last appeal*):

Sire!—

MONTEZUMA (*flaring with anger*):

By the blood of Mictlan, let me pass!!

GUATAMOZIN, *chagrined, steps aside.* MONTEZUMA *descends in pensive pride, while the terrified murmur of the populace is still heard in the city below. The red glow, in the sky, is nothing but the dawn rising with, now, the first streaks of sunrise, mounting higher and higher.* SLOW CURTAIN.)

ACT II—SCENE 2

SCENE—*An Ante-Room in the Palace.* (DROP SCENE.)

Small set, with the effect of half-corridor, half ante-room. Entrance, 1st Right; a large tapestried Entrance, 1st Left. At Back, an alcove with reclining cushions. Near it, a low table with incense and smoking paraphernalia. The walls are decorated in varied colors, with Aztec scrolls and symbols. Directly over the divan are two square windows without glass or trimmings, disclosing beyond a clear, blue sky, in sharp contrast to the stuffiness and partial gloom of the interior.

(MONTEZUMA, *pale and haggard, is seated on the divan, smoking a long varnished pipe, absolutely motionless but for the smoke, curling above his head, his deep-set eyes gazing meditatively into space.*

At extreme Right, CACAMA *and* CUITLAHUA *are standing with troubled countenances, as they watch* MONTEZUMA, *who seems oblivious to everyone about him.*

Soon the feather-tapestry parts at Left, and ACATLAN *enters, one of the two legitimate wives of Montezuma, accompanied by* TAPIA. *After* ACATLAN *has approached the monarch,* TAPIA *turns back and beckons off into the apartments beyond, when two young women enter, carrying a golden service for "chocotatl." A cup of "chocotatl" is handed to* ACATLAN, *who kneels, beseechingly, with it before the monarch.*)

ACATLAN (*coaxingly*):

Oh Master, is it well to grieve, or let
The days go by without some sweetness?

(*Offering him the "chocotatl"*)—

Here,

If it prove little nourishment, the gods
Would not be angry. Pray you, take it, Sire!

(MONTEZUMA, *stern and inflexible, not so much as moves an eyelash to his wife's entreaty, till* ACATLAN, *despairing of any response, finally rises to her feet, hands the cup to* TAPIA, *who hands it back, in turn, to the serving-women, who quietly move out.*

As ACATLAN *is about to seat herself near* MONTEZUMA *to remonstrate further,* CACAMA *approaches him.*)

CACAMA:

Sire, where is the line between the mind
And fancy, but, sometime, we dream beyond
The facts of action, when our fears are more
Than truth can show, and, dreaming, fear for nothing?

MONTEZUMA (*in a low voice, as he lifts his eyes for the first time and fastens them on* CACAMA):

Is Tcalac returned?

CACAMA (*set back*):

No, Sire,—

(*In perplexed manner, as he glances over his shoulder toward the door, Right*)

—not yet.—

(*Reverting back to his meditation for a long time,* MONTEZUMA *shakes his head dubiously, as though battling with thoughts he dare not express.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with impatience, as he casts off his lethargy*):

How long, then, must we wait?—If he

Has reached Ithualco, he must have met
Malinche, close to the crest.—Who knows, by now,
Malinche has looked down on Tenochtitlan?
(*With bravado.*)
He will not think so lightly, *now!*
(*After a pause.*)
He may
Go back, and then from Zempoalla, part
By the same course.—But Tcalac will know.
If we can please Malinche with treasure, it
Might pay us to be rid of him.
(*Threateningly.*)
Should he
Return, and think, again, to move upon us,
Ah, we shall see that he will *not* return!
(*After another pause, as presentiment impresses itself again.*)
If they can wing the waters of the sea,
(*Pointing Right*)
Might they not come and sweep the North as well,
(*Pointing Left*)
The West,—and South? Humph, what are we when gods
Declare themselves against us?—I can see
My cities buried in the sands of time,
My people, slaves!—Ah, has that never been?
Where are the Toltec dynasties? Where are
The Chichimecs, and the Alcolhuas?
Gone, gone,
(*Drawing a series of short puffs at his pipe, and watching, with wavering gaze, the wreaths of smoke.*)
as surely as the clouds arise
To vanish on the breezes of the world!

CUITLAHUA (*bursing with impatience, as he paces forward*):

But will that save you, Sire. Malinche, so near,
I would not spend my time supposing?

MONTEZUMA (*looking up in surprise*):

Ah?

CUITLAHUA:

For Guatamozin yet, will rule the people,
Nor shall I blame him!
(*Disgustedly*)
Brother, I believe
Your early thoughts of Heaven made you brood
So long, on the deep mysteries of Life,
That you are now the slave of priests—a creature,
Who prays for his deliverance, while he rules
An Empire!

MONTEZUMA (*in meditative silence*):

Ah?—

CUITLAHUA (*clenching his fist*):

Oh, rouse yourself! The Truth
Is in your arm, this instant, while Malinche
Is nearing every hour, when as a god,
He may, indeed, sweep over us, and when
The prophet will have told the truth? Oh, then,—

MONTEZUMA:

What matter then?

CUITLAHUA:

(*Bending over in a threatening posture, while Montezuma, unable to contain himself any longer, slowly rises from his seat.*)

While do not blame the 'tzin,
If as a youth, whose blood is strong in him,
(*With whipping scorn*)
He tears the people from you, and inspires
Some touch of *nature* in them!

MONTEZUMA (*snarling with rage*):
By the Gods,
(*Rising his height*)
In my own blood, is there this treason?

CUITLAHUA:
Ay!!

(MONTEZUMA *and his brother stand like two wild beasts, eyeing each other for sometime, when* AYOTAC *enters to announce.*)

AYOTAC (*in cold formality, at Right, after saluting*):
Lord Tcalac!—

(CUITLAHUA *steps grimly to one side and* MONTEZUMA, *quieting himself, rests back again on the divan. Enter* TCALAC, *escorted by several other caciques, who approach* MONTEZUMA, *and make their usual salutations.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with his usual composure, after* TCALAC *has risen*):
He was well pleased with the gifts?

TCALAC:
Yes, Sire. He said——

MONTEZUMA (*with a shrewd smile*):
Ah, what a God is he?—
To come and sweep the sunbeams from the world,
Yet be so pleased at the gleam of a handful of jewels!

TCALAC (*hesitatingly*):

No,
But, Sire!—

MONTEZUMA (*confidently*):

No—Tcalac, he need not fear.
My word is given. My tamanes can bear
Whatever gold that *he* can carry, while
His monarch,—

(*With a contemptuous shrug*)

—who he is, if it is tribute
That he wishes, ah, we can bless his coffers,

(*After a doubtful pause*)

On the promise—

TCALAC:

Sire, he thanked you—

MONTEZUMA (*dumfounded*):

Ah?

TCALAC:

He thanked you, but he dreamed beyond all that.
He seemed more pleased with the valley stretched below him;
The sunlight, playing on the temple walls!

(*Keen disappointment is visible in* MONTEZUMA, *as the ghost of superstition returns.*)

TCALAC:

I looked long in his eyes, Sire, and the light
Of the mountain beast was there! His thin lips curled
When I spoke of the tribute, as to say,
"If so much now, why not a little more?"

Whereon he turned his gaze from left to right,
Still with the curl on his lips and the cold light
In his eyes, his visage, drawn in harsh command,
While his companions ranged themselves behind him.
(*Fearfully*)
Oh, Sire! You need to look on him, and though,
In truth, he is no god, whatever land can claim him,
I could not feel but he was more than human!

MONTEZUMA (*faintly*):

What did he say?—

TCALAC (*harshly*):

"I *must* see Montezuma!
I *must* deliver him, with my own hands,
The message of the Emperor, my Master!"

MONTEZUMA (*with a stifled cry of despair*):

Gods! Will he come, then—will he come?
(*Throwing his hands over his eyes and sobbing.*)

ACATLAN (*sympathetically*):

Oh, Sire!

MONTEZUMA (*in bitter grief*):

Of what avail do we resist a fate,
When even the gods declare themselves against us?
And yet I mourn, most, for the old and feeble,
The women and babes, who cannot fight nor flee,
While for myself and the brave men around me,
Ah, we must bear our breasts to the storm, and face
It as we may!

CACAMA:

But, Sire, can we not
Receive them as our guests?

CUITLAHUA:

Guests?—

CACAMA (*gently*):

Ay,—so late,—
Then to be armed as though we feared their malice.

CUITLAHUA (*disgustedly*):

This is no time for courtesy, Cacama!

MONTEZUMA (*as he considers*):

Yet this Malinche, surely he has not come
For ruin, merely. If his god speaks truth,
If there is reason in him.

CUITLAHUA (*sarcastically*):

That he comes
To devastate our temples, and to rear
What he believes his god!

MONTEZUMA (*skeptically*):

Ah, I should like
To know what manner of god is he, who, so
They tell us, sprung from a virgin. Why the sign
Of Tlaloc? Oh, I should like to know
What destiny has brought Malinche, to plunge
Us in the midst of ages!

(*With sudden decision*)—

I shall meet
This man, and I shall see with my own eyes,
And hear from his own lips, what destiny
Has brought him here!

(*Gradually rising to his feet*)—

Then we shall know what monarch is so great,
To send his servants to insult me!

(*In bravado, as he rises to his height*)—What
Am *I*, afraid in this belief of Quetzal,
Only to see my temples torn,—the tribes,
Turned to rebellion,—city after city,
Crushed down,—town after town, drawn
From my allegiance?—Then——!

(*As he is just throwing his "tilmatli" majestically over his left shoulder, the booming of a distant cannon is heard through the open windows, at Back. The report of this echoes and re-echoes over the lake, and* MONTEZUMA, *stupefied with superstitious awe, and trembling in every fibre, drops his arms limply at his side, remaining in this posture for some time, listening, dumfoundedly, till the last echo has died away.*)

TCALAC (*in worry*):

Sire, they are close to Iztapalapan!

MONTEZUMA (*choking with fear*):

Oh, Gods of my fathers!—Gods!—We might as well
Banish thunder itself, or hide the light of the stars,
That we may never see the heavens again!

(*Quickly commissioning* CACAMA)—

Go you, Cacama! Meet him on the causeway!
Bear my good-will, and say that I shall come.

(*Exit* CACAMA.)

And he will speak the truth, if he has truth,
To force his way so far, else by the gods——!

(*Turning to move out by the tapestried entrance, at Left.*)

CUITLAHUA (*in loud disgust*):

Ay, by the gods, and you betray yourself
As never man betrayed!

(MONTEZUMA *turns quickly and faces his brother, eyeing him for some time sternly and silently.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with disdain*):

I am my people,—
And if I fail, at last, then Aztlan fails!
While if it's Destiny that speaks, nor you
Nor I can keep Malinche away from here!

(*With an assured smile*)—

But, in his welcome, he will note our splendor!

(*In vain pride*)—

Nor will he dare, when he shall see the wealth
And forces of this Empire,—when he sees
Tenochtitlan, built on the waves; my temples,
Soaring to Heaven, like the peaks of Nature;
The floating gardens of Texcuco, with
The people prostrate at my feet, like
The waving maize in the breeze of the evening!

(*Threateningly, as he lowers his voice*)—

Then should he think, or even dream of conquest——!

CUITLAHUA (*after a pause*):

Ah, then?—

MONTEZUMA (*after a thoughtful pause, with a slight tremor in his voice*):

We shall take council of the gods!

(*He turns quietly away, and with* TAPIA *holding up the tapestried curtain, disappears, with his usual reserve, into the inner apartments.*)

ACT II SCENE 3

SCENE—*The Gate of Xolox, on the Southern Causeway, leading into the City of Tenochtitlan.*

The entrance to the causeway is from Left, by way of Iztapalapan. The Gate or Fortress of Xolox extends along the Right of the stage. Through the gate one passes on his way to the capital. The causeway is broad and made of smooth stone and lime. A low parapet extends at Back, with the dark blue Lake of Texcuco beyond, and still further, on the opposite shore, the white city of Texcuco. The shore is also dotted with many villages, made up of low stucco houses, many of which are built out into the water. The whole scene is bathed in the clear light of noon. As a background, above graduating hills, tower the snow-capped mountains of Popocatapetl and Iztaccihuatl, against a sky radiant and crystalline.

The causeway is thronged with a mob of every description, from the rich merchant class down to the humblest "tamane." The dress of many is gaudy and picturesque, while the majority are clad either very simply or very poorly.

Great excitement is evinced in the throng, many shouting at the top of their voices, "The Gods! The Gods!" above the general murmur.

Following close on this, the military music of the Spaniards is distinguished, Off Left, approaching nearer and nearer, and in just proportion to the increasing proximity, murmurs of awe and wonder arise in the immediate locality of the causeway.

At this moment a detachment of Aztec police force their way through the Gate, and clear a passage, with

cries of "Aside! Aside!" The people fall to right and left, while many remain, lined up along the further edge of the causeway.

In strange contrast to the Castilian military music, marked by drum and clarion, the measured intonation of the Aztec conch-bells and attabals are heard as it approaches by way of the Gate of Xolox.

Aztec soldiery files in from the city, with waving green plumes and silver casques. They line themselves at Back and along the sides.

A procession of Aztec petty nobility enter, carrying wands of office. They have no sooner made their appearance than they turn and bow. CACAMA *enters, as Montezuma's representative, to announce his approach. The caciques fall to right and left, while* CACAMA *remains standing at Right Center, awaiting the entrance of Cortez.*

Meanwhile the Castilian band has been approaching, and, in short order, makes its appearance on the scene. The musicians are scarred and weather-beaten, and though few in number, enter with the air of conquest. They turn and range themselves at Back, their music, for the time, drowning the more sedate and melancholy strains of the Aztec.

After an interval and at some distance ahead of the cavalcade, DONA MARINA *enters, on foot—a comely, intelligent Indian woman of high caste, in a short tunic and leggings, representing the Spaniards, as she steps boldly forward with the authority of a princess.*

Following, and preceded by his Page, JUAN DE SALAZAR, *comes* HERNANDO CORTEZ, *on horseback, his vizor up, his eagle aspect sharply outlined and in striking contrast to his ashen countenance, tanned by*

the hot sun, his black beard falling imperially over a steel corselet. Except for his restless eyes, his face is stern and immobile, as he makes his entrance upon the scene like some imminent Fate.

At some little distance behind, his lieutenants, ALVARDO, SANDOVAL, AVILA, LEON, OLID, *and* LUJO, *follow, also on horseback, and in full armor. Other horsemen accompany them, but not more than fifteen in the entire number. They are all gentlemen adventurers of the early Spanish type.*

Riding on mules, with tinkling bells, come BARTOLOME DE OLMEDO, *Father Confessor, bare-headed, and accompanied by* JUAN DIAZ, *Catholic Licentiate of the conquest.*

Except for the Spanish flags, the arquebusiers and artillery in the rear, the procession, at this point, halts; the Spanish music ceases, and with the Aztec cymbals beginning to lower their clangor, attention is riveted on CACAMA, *who approaches* DONA MARINA *as Cortez's interpretress and mistress.*)

CACAMA (*with form*):

The Emperor has sent me on, Malinche,
To bear his welcome; while, in love and grace,
He will be here to greet you!

DONA MARINA (*with courteous precision*):

We are pleased,
My lord, in such a greeting! We are grateful,
And stand in fond obedience to his wishes!

(*The Aztec strains rise again.* CACAMA *steps to one side, while a detachment of Montezuma's Royal Guards enter with slow, measured pace through the*

gateway. They carry over their shoulders the "maquahuitl," or Indian club, with its sharp blades of obsidian.

After them come three Officers of State, each bearing a golden wand.

Next MONTEZUMA *himself appears, borne in a gorgeous palanquin. No sooner has the Indian populace discerned its approach than, high and low, as one man, fall on their knees and bow their heads.*

The palanquin is carried on the shoulders of four nobles, and glitters throughout with gold. Four others hold aloft, by means of slender posts, a canopy of interlaced feather-work, fringed with silver and studded with jewels. These attendants are all barefooted, approaching in slow, measured pace, with their eyes on the ground. Never in the interim, has the sad, rhythmic strain of the conches ceased, while MONTEZUMA *is being slowly and reverently borne toward Center.*

At a signal, a second troupe of attendants rush forward and spread out, in perfect order, a long cotton carpet, that MONTEZUMA, *in stepping from the palanquin, might not soil his feet. With the same deliberate precision and with great care, the caciques now lower the palanquin. The canopy is still held aloft, while, great care, that it may reach the ground without the least possible jar. The canopy is still held aloft, while, for the first time,* MONTEZUMA *bows his head, and with a melancholy smile extends a welcoming hand toward* CORTEZ.

MONTEZUMA *is clothed in the "tilmatli" of his nation, a long cloak, with a girdle of fine cotton, and sprinkled over with jewels, where the emerald and "chalchivitl," the green stone of the Aztecs, are espe-*

cially shown. He wears a light crown or "copilli," in which is set a head-dress of green plumes, curling upward, and then falling back gracefully over his shoulders. A sceptre rests lightly in his hand. Leather thongs, embossed with gold, fastens his sandals, while the soles of the sandals are of solid gold.

MONTEZUMA *alights from his palanquin and, simultaneously,* CORTEZ *and his lieutenants, from their horses. The monarch steps forward, along the carpet, supported by* CACAMA *and* CUITLAHUA. *In turn, with loud clashing of steel,* CORTEZ *and the others move to meet him, while* DONA MARINA *remains at Center, acting as interpretress.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in a kindly, modulated voice*):

Little the wonder that my heart is touched
At seeing you, Malinche! Here you are welcome!
Take what you will! Your comrades, rest awhile!

(*As he studied, slyly, the accoutrements of Cortez and his men*)—

And though you come from some strange land, I take it

(*After a thoughtful pause*)—

Humanity should still abide the same;
The heart is the heart for all that, while the mind
Is searching, ever, for some touch in nature.

(*Observing shrewdly*)—

Is it not so? Much as the undying truth
Lives in the ages.

(*Pausing, and then suddenly, as an afterthought*)—

You must tell me more!—
What Emperor you serve? What is your purpose?

(*Reassuming instantly his hospitality*)—

But for the while, let us forget! During your stay
We shall speak more of that!—Meanwhile, be welcome!

DONA MARINA:

My master, Sire, bears his gratitude,
Touched by your kindness! Deep his admiration
For the beauty that he meets here,—deep respect
For the mind that conceived it!

(*Imperiously*)—

He has come
To speak the Message of the Christ!

MONTEZUMA (*confused*):

Ah?

DONA MARINA (*with spirit*):

Sire,
In many lands the name of Montezuma
Has cast its splendor, yet the Message speaks

(*Pointing Off, with a sweeping gesture*)—

From the distant nations of Tlapallan!
It searches for the heart of Montezuma;
It seeks to purge the soul of its excrescence;
To teach the Atonement and the Resurrection;
Christ Risen, in the name of Trinity,—
Sprung of the Virgin,—(*Pointing to Heaven*)—
Son of the Almighty God!

(MONTEZUMA *is at once dumfounded and amazed, and not altogether pleased, while* MARINA, *indicating* CORTEZ, *continues*)—

And here, my master, in the name of Spain,
Liege of its Sovereign, as a humble honor,

Sire, of your great goodness, proffers you
This token of regard.

(CORTEZ *at once steps forward and hangs a long string of colored crystals about* MONTEZUMA'S *neck.*)

MONTEZUMA (*as he gradually regains his composure*):

It pleases me,
Malinche, to hear your sovereign so well
Disposed toward me, and, in our friendship, may——

(CORTEZ *steps impulsively forward to embrace him, when* CACAMA *and* CUITLAHUA *quickly intercept him, shocked by any such profanation of their Emperor.*)

MONTEZUMA (*resuming, in a colder tone, as he turns to* CUITLAHUA):

So let it pass!—Lord Cuitlahua, here,
Will lead you to the Palace of Axaya.
Nor will the hours slip fast enough, Malinche,
Before we speak again on this great question.

(*After another moment of reflection*)—

Ah, there is much of Quetzal in your god,
While I have known often, by devious paths,
Friendly discourse to bear the selfsame truth.

(*As a parting speech, as he turns back to his palanquin*)—

Ay, we shall see,—so may *my* gods protect you!

(CORTEZ *and his lieutenants remain standing till* MONTEZUMA *has seated himself in the palanquin and is about to be lifted again upon the shoulders of his caciques, when the Spaniards turn about abruptly and, with the aid of pages, remount their horses. The palanquin is borne back to the city, by way of the Gate*

of Xolox, in the same deliberate manner with which it entered.

The Aztec music rises again in its mournful strains, while, in sharp contrast, the little band of Spanish musicians strike up their Castilian war-songs, with one general movement of impatience throughout the entire ranks of the Spaniards.

With DONA MARINA, *following close after the palanquin,* CORTEZ *no sooner has mounted his horse than he turns impetuously to his men, and shouts at the top of his voice.*)

CORTEZ (*triumphantly*):

Adelante, señores,—por Dios y Christo!

(*The Spaniards, on the scene and along the line, Off Left, return with the shouts, "Viva Cortez! Viva Espana!" when a series of cannon shots are fired Off Left and a wave of terror sweeps through the dense crowds of the populace.*

With the martial music of the Spaniards the loud tramp of their horses, the clashing of steel, and the boisterous shouting of the soldiery, the procession starts on its way, following the palanquin of MONTEZUMA, *into the city of Tenochtitlan.*

After CORTEZ *and his horsemen have passed, as well as* OLMEDO *and the priests, along with several flags, the artillery is drawn across the stage by Tlascalan slaves, with the gunners close behind them carrying lighted matches. Afterward come the main body of the arquebusiers and cross-bowmen, with rough, belligerent features, ready at a moment's notice to lift their weapons, followed, in turn, by the fierce Tlascalan allies of* CORTEZ, *in gaudy attire, smiling grimly on their hereditary enemy, the Aztecs.*

For the first time, here, the pride of the Aztec populace asserts itself, and an angry growl and commotion overwhelms the scene. At the beginning of this disturbance, the Curtain falls, with still the mingled music of Aztec and Spaniard dying in the distance.)

ACT III

SCENE—*The Council Chamber in the Palace.*

Tapestried entrances at Back, also at Left and Right. A low throne, at a diagonal in Upper Right, surrounded by a number of stools, curiously carved.

The entrances, at Back, when the tapestries are drawn, look out on a corner of a huge courtyard.

(IZTLIL *is discovered standing Up Stage, holding aside one of the tapestries and looking out into the courtyard. At Left Center, facing him, is a cacique, presumably a Tlascalan, acting as one of Cortez's spies in the palace, and, evidently, in communication with* IZTLIL.

The latter drops the tapestry, at Back, moves to Right Center, and listens Off Right, then returns to his companion, at Left Center.)

IZTLIL (*in an undertone*):

When was this move planned,—recently?

TLASCALAN SPY:

Last night,
Lord Iztlil. We could hear Malinche pace back
And forth; while others prayed, throughout the night,
That this affair might pass without suspicion.

IZTLIL (*with an assuring smile*):

Malinche need have no fear, Tlascalan,
With courtiers in the gardens, and old men,
Close to his person——

TLASCALAN SPY (*anxiously*):

And the Guard, my lord?

IZTLIL (*indicating at Back*):

Oh, some twelve men with Maxtla; but they draw

The curtains in these councils, and, at best,
The Emperor is quite alone, where still
He may be seen, without exciting doubt
As to the purpose. Let me yet advise you,
Both as a blind to Emperor and people,
He must not part hence as a prisoner,—
Rather,—leave of his own accord.

TLASCALAN SPY (*taking note*):

Ah, ha!

IZTLIL:

Act quickly, for the 'tzin and Cuitlahua
Are close at hand for means to rouse the people.
(*Holding his arm confidentially*)—
The Emperor, recall you, is a woman
In every counsellor's hands, but open war
He does not favor. No one knows this more
Than your Malinche, yet let him still be careful!
A word from the Emperor to Guatamo would
Unloose a storm such as Anahuac
Has never witnessed! Hold the Emperor's person
And seal his lips, the Aztec people will
Not dare to raise a weapon.

(*As the* TLASCALAN *is about to speak* IZTLIL *turns his head suddenly and exclaims under his breath*)—

Ssh!—

TLASCALAN SPY:

Lord Iztlil,
For this favor, I—

IZTLIL (*indifferently*):

Go!—Malinche and I are friends,
While I am here to serve him.—Fare you well!—

(*Enter the aged cacique,* CIHUACA, *just before the conclusion of the speech, when, at the same time, the* TLASCALAN *retires Left, under rather suspicious circumstances.* CIHUACA *evidently notes this, when* IZTLIL *turns on him with a bland smile.*)

IZTLIL (*as he moves to meet him*):

So now, my lord Cihuaca, you see,
The gods have spared their vengeance.—
(*Laughing lightly.*)

CIHUACA (*with serious doubt*):

Yet who knows
Whether they come in friendship or in conquest?

IZTLIL (*with a careless laugh*):

Ask Guatamozin!—

CIHUACA (*indignant at Iztlil's levity*):

Never had your father
Iztlil, borne insults such as we receive!
Who is this conqueror, who climbs our temples,
Stamps in the sanctuaries of the god,
And lifts his hand to smash the image?

IZTLIL (*indifferently*):

There
Are temples enough in all Anahuac,
That it would take Malinche these many moons
Before he could destroy them.

CIHUACA (*sternly shocked*):

Ah?—Destroy!—
And so you treat, Iztlil, the faith of your fathers!

IZTLIL (*shrugging his shoulders*):

What does it matter, if we learn to live,
And solve, at best, the means of sustenance?
Even the priests, I find, do not neglect
This necessary problem, while they end by seeking
That comfort which their piety deplores.
I care not if I worship moon or stars,
My lord, as long the world is not unkind!
Because I chanced to be a younger son,
And destiny had borne its fangs upon me,
Reliance was my weapon for all time.
Now, I have found the world itself my friend,
By overlooking what is weak and needless
In the great purpose of one's own desires.

(*The measured intonation of the conches are heard, Off Left.*)

CIHUACA (*shaking his head and remaining silent for some time*):

Yet it is still a pity!

IZTLIL (*with a sneer on his lips at the door, as he turns to move out*):

Not to me!
It is the fool who cries too deeply, while
The wise man, knowing weakness is the cause
Of grief,—as crime is weakness, leading all
To sorrow,—seeks the high star of his fortune!

(CIHUACA, *bent and aged, without the twitching of a muscle, remains standing in reflective attitude, while* IZTLIL *saunters breezily out of the chamber, at Back, dropping the curtains as he goes out.*)

(*At the same time* MONTEZUMA *enters, in his usual slow, deliberate manner, accompanied by his young son,*

IOHUALICAHUA, *whom he holds close by the shoulder. The Emperor seats himself, Upper Right, with his son at his feet, surrounded by some six or seven counsellors, among them* TCALAC *and* MECAMECA. *He remains seated, gazing for some time at the silent figure of* CIHUACA, *standing, deep in reflection, with back turned, at Center.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with a smile*):

So, uncle, are you wrapped, still, in your fancy,
That you believe a destiny is here;
And, after all, our little lives are spent
To please the gods, like flowers on the chinampas?

CIHUACA (*rising out of his revery and facing him*):

We breathe the fragrance of Nature, Sire, but like
The flowers, we wilt and die, if we neglect
The *force* of Nature.

MONTEZUMA:

That has always been,
Cihuaca, except, sometimes, the heart
Will not allow the mind its proper freedom.

CIHUACA:

And to your heart you take these strangers, Sire!
What is the outcome? Will they bide in peace,
They, who have borne so many handships,—risked
Their lives,—for what? Not as mere messengers!
Why are they here? To be so easily pleased
With what you offer? Is the eagle tamed
By kindness when he swoops upon the nests
Of foreign creatures? You have spurned the Prince,
Your brother, as before you drove the 'tzin
Out where the people will ennoble him!

That is your blood, Sire, while you keep
So close to you a serpent such as Iztlil,
Breathing the praises of Malinche,
(*Lowering his voice with intensity*)—
but let
Us warn you, Sire,—it was a hapless time
That ever brought Malinche to Aztlan!

MONTEZUMA (*angrily*):

Why?
Malinche and I are friends! Ill would it seem
That I should lodge him in my father's palace,
To murder him. What can he do beyond
The precepts of his god? If he has seen
The people arm themselves, why should not he?
While here, is he not welcome? Does he think,
Because Guatamo is imprudent, that my mind
Speaks there? Oh, why provoke a discord, when,
In truth, Malinche has come here as my guest?
Has he no right, as an ambassador,
To be so treated?

CIHUACA:

Sire, as a marauder,
With precepts of a god to hide his purpose.
If not, why should he prostitute our temples?
So soon, have you forgot Cholula, Sire?

MONTEZUMA:

No, no, Cihuaca!—There he did wrong!
(*Lowering his voice mysteriously*)—
But did I tell you what I saw last night?
Near to the dawn, out of Tlapallan
(*Crossing his fingers*)—
—like Tlaloc!

The stars above shone of a sudden brighter,
While in the breeze arose strange moans and cries!
Ah, then my heart forgave me that Malinche
Was here to bear the message of the gods,—
For was it not decreed Quetzal would come
To devastate the temples?

(*After a pause*)—

—Yet I see,
It was the *Spirit* of Quetzal, after all!

(*After a moment's silence, as he looks questioningly at Cihuaca*)—

You did not see it, no? Nor did you hear
A murmur,—late (*superstitiously*), ah, late, a little time
Before Malinche loosened his thunder?

CIHUACA:

Sire,
Those were the angry cries of the *people!*

MONTEZUMA (*in surprise*):

Ah?

CIHUACA:

The noise of riot in the market-places!

MONTEZUMA (*indignantly*):

Angry, you say? Why, then, should they be angry?
Is not Malinche my guest? What beasts are they
Who would insult my friends, and so, in turn,
Dishonor me?

CIHUACA:

They hail to Guatamozin,—
And now, from Iztapalapan, they come
To greet your brother.

MONTEZUMA (*with injured pride*):

Do the herds of tribes
Come here to greet my brother?
Who am *I*,
That I should bear this insult?

CIHUACA (*unflinchingly*):

They have seen,
Of late, Malinche is no more god than I;
That Mualox and others spoke untruths;
While this belief in Quetzal is a lure,
Which, in awakening, cannot save these strangers.

MONTEZUMA:

Then woe to Guatamozin, if he stirs
The fire without my orders!

CIHUACA:

It had been
Far wiser, Sire, instead of harboring Iztlil,
Who was your enemy, and, in his heart,
Still bears the mark of malice, you upheld
Your nephew, who has done what he believes
His duty.

MONTEZUMA (*with anger*):

Duty?—

CIHUACA:

In the rights of the *people!*

MONTEZUMA (*threateningly*):

By the high hand of Huitzil, it is *you*
Who would now seek to advise me. By the gods!
My future is my *own,* and no one's else!

(*Loud murmurs are heard, Off, and soon afterwards the clashing of steel and the heavy tread of mailed feet. As* MONTEZUMA *is reclining back on his throne,* MAXTLA *enters at Back.*)

MAXTLA:

Malinche, Sire!

(*As he holds up the curtain, at Back, enter* CORTEZ, *armed, but for his helmet, which* JUAN DE SALAZAR *carries behind him, and* DONA MARINA. *They are immediately followed by* CORTEZ'S *lieutenants,* ALVARADO, SANDOVAL, LEON *and* AVILA, *who, along with* CORTEZ, *with the exception of a few Spanish oaths, as utterances of impatience, act, throughout the scene, in a pantomimic capacity, while the conversation with* MONTEZUMA *is carried entirely by the interpretress,* DONA MARINA *who acts, throughout the play, as she does in history, as the veritable mouthpiece of* CORTEZ. *As she speaks she can tell circumstantially any change of thought in his mind from the otherwise neatly laid plan of action, making constantly any change of expression on his face or any impatient gesture.*)

(*The lieutenants, also completely armed, but for their casques, which they carry on their left arms, range themselves, like columns of steel, behind* CORTEZ, *while* DONA MARINA *holds her position between the General and* MONTEZUMA.)

CIHUACA *and the other aged counsellors are standing about the Emperor, with the young Prince,* IOHUALICAHUA, *seated at his feet. After having ushered in the Spaniards,* MAXTLA *retires once more into the courtyard beyond, where Aztec soldiery are seen on guard, dropping the curtain as he goes out.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in sincere greeting, as he extends his hand*):

May this fair day, Malinche, be what the gods
Have chosen for your visit! May the years
Prosper the same,—and to each other's gladness!

(CORTEZ *smiles and bows, as well as his lieutenants.*)

DONA MARINA:

So are we grateful to you, Mighty Sire;
And may the Holy Virgin of our Christ
Keep you as well!

MONTEZUMA (*with a languid smile, as he indicates some stools near the dais*):

Then would you seat yourself,
Malinche, that we may speak more freely?

DONA MARINA:

Sire,
We thank you, but in presence of our own
Master, it has long been the honored custom
To stand before him, and discourteous
Our attitude would seem if otherwise
We bore ourselves before a sovereign friend
As dear to him as you are, Sire.

MONTEZUMA:

No doubt
Your King is a most excellent sovereign!

(*Changing the topic*)—

My lord Tapia, whom you saw this morning,
Reported you were pleased with your abode.
Indeed, I had expected, if in need
Of comfort, you had merely to command

(*With a careless wave of his hand*)—
For here my provinces are at your service!
(*Turning to one of the aged caciques, at Right.*)

DONA MARINA:

Sire, the lord Tapia was most kind!

MONTEZUMA:

Ah, I am glad of that!

(*The aged cacique hands to* MONTEZUMA *a small gold chest, out of which the Emperor takes some jeweled trinkets, and bestows them, with easy grace, on* CORTEZ *and his lieutenants, who move instantly forward to accept them.*)

MONTEZUMA:

As a remembrance,
Malinche, that this world never can grow cold,
Where friendship is its recompense.
(*To Alvarado*)—
To you, fair Chief, whom I have heard called Tonatiuh,
Because your countenance is like the sun,
And fairness lies wherever nature smiles.
(*To Sandoval, Leon and Olid*)—
As well to you, my Chiefs,—here you are welcome!
(*After receiving their gifts, they bow and retire to their respective positions.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with the same largess*):

That in the future friendship may be bound,
I should consider it, Malinche, deep honor,
If you accepted one of my fair daughters!

And I would see your Chiefs were pleased as well,
For there, I trust, you have not yet beheld
The princesses that grace Anahuac,
Without whose charm, the beauty of the rose,
In having nothing to compare it with,
Might lose its fragrance.

(CORTEZ *and his lieutenants, divining the meaning, are highly amused, and Alvarado just saves himself from laughing outright.*)

DONA MARINA (*turning back, somewhat embarrassed and smiling with Cortez*):

Pardon, Sire, but in
The land my master left behind him is
A woman whom he, perforce, must call his wife.

MONTEZUMA (*mystified*):

Ah, so? Why not another?

DONA MARINA:

In the law
Of Christ's religion it is so decreed.

MONTEZUMA (*with a shrug of his shoulders*):

Ah, then it is a law that seems to please
The vanity of woman, while to man—
(*Thinking, and then ending with a sigh*)—
Well, what is so decreed, let it remain.
(*Laying his hand down gently on his son,* IOHUALICAHUA'S *head*)—
I think my son still bears his gratitude,
Though he believes in his father's gods!
(*With renewed concern, as he changes the topic*)—

Does not
The time wear wearily, Malinche?—No games,
No pleasure in the languor of the hours?—

DONA MARINA:

My master, Sire, has his pastimes, for
Without some pleasure of the moment life
Would make the mind grow old and the body feeble.
(*With a spirited smile, as she stamps her foot*)—
He takes his pastimes, though, in the arts of war!

MONTEZUMA:

But that is labor!—
(*With boyish enthusiasm*)—
You should know the game
Of totoloque,—ah, every calmecac
Plays totoloque!
(*To his son, enthusiastically*)—
Go, Io, get the balls,
And we shall show Malinche!

(*Young* Io *is about to run out of the room, when* CORTEZ *scowls, claps his hands imperatively, and mutters under his breath the warning, "Mira!" meaning, "Take care!"* Io *hesitates and an embarrassing pause follows.* MONTEZUMA *looks questioningly over at* CORTEZ, *while* MARINA, *on her part, is quick to catch the meaning.*)

DONA MARINA (*somewhat sensitively*):

Oh, Mighty Sire, my master has no doubt
It is a noble game, and would be glad
To have you teach him,—some time. But, for now,
He would prefer to have the Prince remain.

(*Another embarrassing pause follows, with* MONTEZUMA *more perplexed than ever, when* CORTEZ *stamps forward with "Pronto!" urging* MARINA *in the main purpose of the visit. Anxiety is betrayed on the Emperor's face as he endeavors to decipher, in the belligerent attitude of* CORTEZ, *the meaning of this side-play. This uncertainty is shown, also, in the faces of* CIHUACA *and the other aged caciques, standing about* MONTEZUMA, *at the same time stepping closer to his person.* DONA MARINA, *during this strained pause, gradually assumes a sterner attitude, her hands are clenched, her head, lifted more proudly, with an inflexible determination marked in her eyes.*)

DONA MARINA:

My master came here on a *mission!*

MONTEZUMA (*anxiously*):

So?

DONA MARINA:

And till its purpose, Sire, is concluded,
He would request you and the Prince to remain!
Should you refuse (*threateningly*), there may be blood
to answer!

MONTEZUMA (*intimidated*):

Then speak your will, though at this instant I
Cannot recall the reason for all this!

DONA MARINA (*suspiciously*):

That is, you have forgotten?

MONTEZUMA (*in confusion*):

What, Malinche?

DONA MARINA (*with disgust*):

Come! We have been your guests, Sire, long enough
To note the treachery beneath your kindness!

MONTEZUMA (*with outraged feeling, as he strikes his breast*):

I?—Treacherous to you!

DONA MARINA (*with invective*):

At Cholula
You sent out orders for a massacre,
With an Aztec army close at its heels!

MONTEZUMA (*dumfounded*):

Ah, who
Thus has betrayed me? You have heard the tongues
Of men speak evil of me! Why, an army
Is always stationed at Cholula, and the crime
Of some cacique, if he had roused the people,
Should not be blamed no me.

(*Indignantly, as he regains his self-confidence*)—

—and what is more,
Malinche, you took a pitiless revenge;
Set fire to my temples there, that even
The distant sky was wrapped in flame! You made
The streets of my Cholula stream with blood;
You murdered many innocent caciques;
Allowed your allies, the Tlascalans,
To ravage our women, pillage hearth and home,—
And now you come to accuse *me* for the crime!

DONA MARINA (*in hardened tone*):

If you remember, long before that time,
In our protection of the Totonacs,

Because we were too warmly welcomed, did
You not command Quauhpopoca to attack us
Outside the walls of Zempoalla, when
We lost more than one brave companion? Did
You not send embassies, beside, to claim
A tribute of young women in such towns
Acknowledging our Sovereign Master?

MONTEZUMA:

It was all Quauhpopoca! It was before
I knew of you, Malinche, though they had brought
Me word of your arrival.

DONA MARINA:

If it *was*
Quaupopoca, Sire, we must claim the right
To have him brought here for his trial.

MONTEZUMA (*meekly*):

Yes!
(*Unfastening the royal signet from his wrist*)—
That will I do most willingly, Malinche.

(*Turning to* MECAMECA, *the youngest of the counsellors behind him*)—

Here, Mecameca,—go to Tuzpan. Show
This signet to the Governor, and see
That he arrives here for his trial.

(*Exit* MECAMECA, *bowing out with his face toward the Emperor, while* MONTEZUMA, *with a sigh of relief, turns to* CORTEZ *with a smile.*)

MONTEZUMA:

So,
Malinche, a little discord should not break
The bonds of friendship,—rather they should fasten

The more, in the clasp of understanding.

(*Instead,* MARINA *and* CORTEZ *remain as implacable as ever, while disappointment is seen on* MONTEZUMA'S *face.*)

DONA MARINA (*after an ominous pause, coldly*):

Still my master is not pleased! He hears the cries
Outside the walls,—he sees the rabble throngs
About the temples,—he marks the silent faces
Of those who were his friends,—he hears, at night,
The imprecations of the priests of Huitzil,—
He sees the flames burn brighter on the altars,
With rising murmurs of the tribes beyond!

MONTEZUMA (*with emphasis*):

Then take my word, Malinche,—this has been done
Without my orders!

DONA MARINA (*persistently*):

By whose orders, Sire?

MONTEZUMA (*shrugging his shoulders by way of deprecation*):

My nephew, Guatamozin, is a youth,
In whom the impulse, sometimes, clogs the reason.
Forgive him for his lack of loyalty
To me, for I have felt it deeper still
Than you have known, Malinche.

DONA MARINA (*shrewdly*):

Is then your brother
In sympathy with Guatamozin?

MONTEZUMA:

Ay,—

(*With assurance*)—

But that is all without avail! What are
The cries of the people, when this hand
Can sweep the Empire? Destiny in Aztlan
(*Pointing Off*)—
Is closed in my chamber at Chapultepec,
Where only the gods can enter!
(*Smiling with assurance*)—
Oh, Malinche,
You need not fear! I should be here to save you!

DONA MARINA (*glancing at Cortez, who assents with a shake of his head*):

My master thinks you may not be concerned
In this rebellion,—still his Sovereign Lord
Is not convinced.

MONTEZUMA (*with an incredulous smile*):

How?—He is far from here!

DONA MARINA:

Yet still his mind speaks in the hearts of the army.

MONTEZUMA (*dubiously*):

Then—what?—

DONA MARINA:

Oh, Sire, nothing would prove your faith,
Until the arrival of Quauhpopoca,
As to take up your residence with us,
In your father's palace.

MONTEZUMA (*overwhelmed*):

What is that?

(*With deep indignation*)—

Malinche!—

DONA MARINA:

Such an act, O Sire, would prove your innocence
And fond regard; and it would set at rest
Silent suspicion in the hearts of many.

MONTEZUMA (*straightening up with indignation*):

When was it known that a great Prince like me
Had ever willingly left his abode,
To be a prisoner in the hands of strangers?

DONA MARINA (*with deceit*):

Oh, not a prisoner, Sire! Indeed, my master
Would be too honored! It would stand the same
As here, Sire, with your counsellors about you,—
Your household, and your people's intercourse.
Beside, O King, you bide in many places,
And time wears well in one place as another.

MONTEZUMA:

Should I consent to such a degradation,—
Ah, never would my people!

(*In perplexity, as he finally lays his hand on* Io's *shoulder*)—

Here, Malinche,
Take one each of my sons and daughters! Take
Them back with you in hostage for their father!
Here, this is my successor,—treat him kindly.

VELASQUEZ DE LEON (*suddenly stamping his mailed foot with impatience*):

Jesu!

SANDOVAL (*at the same time, as the four cavaliers start to draw their swords*):

Madre de Dios!

(MONTEZUMA *is struck dumb.*)

MONTEZUMA (*after a pause, in tremulous voice to* MARINA):

What is that—
They say?

DONA MARINA (*pleadingly*):

Oh, King, why do you waste more words?
Pray go with the Pale-faces to their quarters!
They will accord you kindness for the favor,
While to refuse them might mean violence,—
And, likely,—death!

MONTEZUMA (*completely intimidated*):

Then—I shall go with you!
(*With poignant grief, as he stretches his arms above him*)—
The gods of my fathers have forsaken me,—
And what has been decreed by Quetzal come
To pass,—
(*Covering his eyes, as he bursts into tears*)—
—when I am lost to my own people!
(*Sobbing bitterly, while his head sinks on his breast.*)

DONA MARINA (*with sympathetic emotion*):

(*As* CORTEZ, *with softened attitude, steps instantly forward, kneels, and kisses the Emperor's hand.*)
Sire!—We are grateful to you,—all!

(*After* CORTEZ, *the other cavaliers file up to pay homage, after which they step aside. As* ALVARADO, *the last to kiss the royal hand, rejoins his companions at Left Center, with his left hand still covering his eyes,* MONTEZUMA'S *right falls limply at his side, a symbol of fallen majesty, while* CIHUACA *and the other caciques stand about him in consternation.*)

DONA MARINA (*finally, with shrewd tact*):

My master, Sire, never would be happy
Till you have quite forgiven him the pain
He may have caused you.

MONTEZUMA (*falteringly, as he raises his head*):

I forgive Malinche.

DONA MARINA:

And we are witness, here,—your counsellors,—
Your son,—that you consented to this move,
And that you come quite of your own accord,
For sake of peace, to save your people bloodshed?

MONTEZUMA (*with vacant stare*):

Yes, Malinche,—so the gods decree!

DONA MARINA (*with low bow, as she steps back*):

Then at
Your will, Sire,—we wait upon your judgement.

MONTEZUMA (*in a modulated voice to* CIHUACA, *as he gradually rises again on his throne and turns his gaze slowly in the direction of the courtyard*):

Call you my palanquin!

(CIHUACA *steps down from the dais, and as he is about to draw the curtains aside, turns back with a beseeching gaze toward* MONTEZUMA.)

CIHUACA (*in anguish*):

Sire,

(MONTEZUMA *responds by lifting his head proudly, as though emphasizing the imperativeness of his command, when* CIHUACA, *with one stroke, draws aside the feathered tapestries, revealing the inner beauty of the courtyard, with the blue sky above, and the courtyard itself crowded with Aztec soldiery, caciques and courtiers, interspersed, here and there, with Spanish arquebusiers.*)

(*No sooner had* CIHUACA *drawn the curtains and stepped aside than* MAXTLA *appears in the doorway.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in the same sustained, modulated voice*):

Lord Maxtla,—
I am to pay a visit to Malinche.
(MAXTLA *stands in astonishment*)—
If you will call my palanquin.

MAXTLA (*finally lowering his silver casque*):

Yes, Sire.

(*Exit* MAXTLA, *Upper Right.*)

MONTEZUMA (*calling*):

Tapia!

TAPIA (*emerging from a group, near the entrance of the courtyard*):

Sire?

MONTEZUMA:

Get ready the apartments
My father held in the Palace of Axaya,—
And make it known that I shall bide awhile.

TAPIA (*riveted, as though not believing his senses*):
You are to——

MONTEZUMA (*assenting calmly*):
—at my own desire.

TAPIA (*incredulously*):
Yes, Sire!

(*As* TAPIA, *overcome with astonishment, moves Off Upper Left, the sad rhythm of the conches are heard again, Off Right, and soon the three caciques enter, with golden wands, preceding the bejeweled palanquin, borne on the shoulders of four others. It is lowered gently to the ground, just outside the opening, at Back, when* MONTEZUMA *rises quietly from his throne, steps down majestically from the dais, and calmly seats himself in the palanquin. The little side curtains of the palanquin are let down, shutting* MONTEZUMA *from view. Again the palanquin is lifted on the shoulders of the four caciques, and with the procession following, borne slowly off Upper Left, in rhythmic tread with the conches.*)

(*At a signal,* CORTEZ *and his cavaliers quickly adjust their helmets, draw their swords, and, along with* MARINA, *follow closely after the palanquin. They, in turn, are followed by the Spanish arquebusiers and pikemen, who had, in the meantime, been loitering in the courtyard. At this armed demonstration, along with the action before, it had suddenly dawned on the*

Aztecs that their Emperor was being actually led a prisoner, out of his own palace. A wave of resentment is just sweeping through the throng, with a rising murmur of disapproval, which soon passes beyond into the city, when MUALOX, *the mad priest of Quetzal, with dishevelled hair, bedraggled robes, and a hectic glow in his eyes, thrusts himself from Left into the immediate space of the courtyard, crying out triumphantly and, for the moment, intercepting the furious rush of the people after the palanquin.*)

MUALOX (*shaking his arms wildly in the air*):

Woe!—Woe!—The Aztlan dynasty has fallen!
The Empire of the Montezumas bowed
Before the Flame of Quetzal,—and of God!

(*The fury of the crowd becomes terrific, and in a wave of madness, only equalled by* MUALOX'S *own, hurls itself on the nerve-racked form of the aged priest, flinging him to the ground and killing him instantly, when, leaping over his body, the people rush onward, like an avalanche of Fate, into the streets beyond.*)

(*Meanwhile the cries of resentment have been carried to all parts of the city, and the scene closes with the Aztec people, risen at last against the yoke of* CORTEZ *and his Spaniards.*)

ACT IV

SCENE I

SCENE—*The Western Azotea of the Temple of Huitzil.*

This is a section of the roof of the great war-temple of the Aztecs, dedicated to the God Huitzilopotchli. In the Prologue and in Act II, Scene I, it had been visible in the background, dwarfing in height (approximately 125 feet) every other edifice in Tenochtitlan. The smaller temple of Quetzal, Act I, Scene I, for a long time discredited by the Aztecs, stands close by.

The viewpoint is much more vast from the azotea of this temple than that of Quetzal, so vast, in fact, that the city, with its surrounding towns, cannot be seen from the auditorium.

The near-scene consists of an angular section of a wide stone roof, unbattlemented, with a single stone seat at Right, carved with grotesque figures of serpents and lizards.

Far off to the Left is a view of the Sierra of Ahualco, and to the Right the purple ranges that enclose the valley of Anahuac from the west.

(*At rise, a weird strain, that echoes and re-echoes endlessly, is heard issuing from the valley, like the confused marching, from all directions, of thousands of warriors, with the City of Tenochtitlan as their goal. This far cry continues throughout the scene.*)

(*Twilight is lowering on a beautiful clear sky, with the western horizon still aglow with the setting sun.*)

(GUATAMOZIN *is discovered, a solitary figure, standing close to the edge of the azotea, gazing, in brooding*

silence, with arms crossed, over the southwestern expanses of Anahuac. He is clad in his military orders; gold bracelets about his arms; and topping his silver casque, a panache of green and white plumes.)

(*Several caciques, acting as aides, are standing in a group some distance from him, also resplendent in the feather and silver ornaments of their nation. Instead of silver casques, some have the skin of wild animals' heads to serve as helmets, with the rest of the pelt falling over their shoulders. This tends to give them a ferocious aspect.*)

GUATAMOZIN (*after a pause, as half to himself in the spirit of exhortation, all the while gazing out over the valley*):

Oh, gods of my fathers,—give me time!

(*After a moment's lapse a sudden commotion is heard, Off Right, and* TETEPANQUEZAL, *Prince of Tacuba, enters hurriedly, accompanied by several attendants.*)

TETEPANQUEZAL (*excitedly, as he enters*):

Guatamo, we have the forces from Michuaca,
And Tangapan, stifling past revenge,
Glad for the action, has himself arrived,
Waiting your order at Tacuba!

GUATAMOZIN (*clapping his hands with joy*):

Gods!
Bless you, dear Tetepanquezal! Bless
The tongue that can persuade an enemy
To take up arms, when he had vowed against us!
Close up your district of Tacuba. Block
The West, with the Michuacans behind you,

And to safeguard retreat, line up the shore
Far as Tepeaca!
(*In spirit, as he points out over the valley*)—
See!—The Cholulans
Are rounding now from Iztapalapan,—
The Alcomanes behind them! Ah, my friend,
What moving causeway but humanity
Is throbbing there,—and far as you can see,
The signal fires are rising high in Aztlan,
Like the flames of Popoca!

TETEPANQUEZAL (*in the same spirit*):
'Tzin—Malinche
Will never leave Tenochtitlan alive,—
While there is breath in Aztlan!
(*Exit* TETEPANQUEZAL, *hurriedly.*)

GUATAMOZIN:
If the gods
Are pleased to hear!
(*Calling*)—
Lord Modoc!

MODOC (*stepping quickly out of the group of attending caciques, serving as aides*):
Noble 'tzin?

GUATAMOZIN (*in swift command*):
My lord, inform my uncle, Cuitlahua,
That every hour is precious,—that we should move
To catch Malinche when he might least expect us!
Here I shall wait for him till morning, when
The neighboring Chiefs should reach Tenochtitlan,
And further tribes, close to Anahuac.

(*Exit* MODOC, *as* GUATAMOZIN *turns back to the edge of the azotea.*)

When we shall know the truth of a decree,
And whether Destiny shall rule in Aztlan!

(*He lapses, once more, into a brooding silence, as he contemplates the approaching columns of the tribes, while the mingled murmur in the valley rises louder than ever.*)

(*After a pause,* HUTEPEC *enters, the friend of* GUATAMOZIN, *escorting the Princess,* TECUICHPO, *accompanied by her woman,* TIZNA. HUTEPEC approaches GUATAMOZIN, *absorbed in his own thought, while at the entrance of the Princess, who remains at Right, the several caciques, at Back, bow their heads in homage.*)

HUTEPEC (*touching him on the shoulder*):
'Tzin!

GUATAMOZIN (*half turning his head*):
Hutepec?—

HUTEPEC (*signifying behind him*):
The Princess Tecuichpo!

(GUATAMOZIN *turns.* TECUICHPO *makes an impulsive move toward him, when, at once recognizing the Princess,* GUATAMOZIN *raises his hand as a motion for the caciques to retire.*)

(*Exeunt caciques, while* HUTEEC *and* TIZNA *retire just off of Right.*)

TECUICHPO:
Guatamo!—

GUATAMOZIN:

Do you come here, when the streets
Are filled with tribesmen?

TECUICHPO:

If you knew! Malinche——
Is *starving!*

GUATAMOZIN:

Ah!—Then he knows why we closed
The markets? We shall force him from the walls,
Tecuichpo,—or he *must* starve!

TECUICHPO:

Ah, but
My father! Is he made to suffer with Malinche?

GUATAMOZIN (*implacably*):

Why is he then his friend, to thrust
Himself in his power?

TECUICHPO:

Ah, if you knew, Guatamo!
He has been guarded like a prisoner,——
Dishonored, and the more, because Malinche
Must needs believe that father closed the markets,
And, at his wish, the people have arisen
To avenge him.

GUATAMOZIN (*sternly*):

Your father is not Aztlan,
Tecuichpo,—though he had come to believe it!
And so Malinche believes your father, Aztlan;
That he can guard his persons, and the fate of
Of Anahuac is sealed!

TECUICHPO:

But he is still
The Emperor!

GUATAMOZIN:

Yet who shall say he rules
An Empire?
(*Pacing to Left and returning*)—
I have prayed, Tecuichpo,
That Montezuma might be freed to Aztlan,—
That he might feel the warrior's pulse again,
If merely, once, to cast these strangers from him!

TECUICHPO (*sadly*):

So has he strived—

GUATAMOZIN:

—and failed!

TECUICHPO:

Because he still
Believes some destiny is written here,
And, in the *end*,—Anahuac shall fall.

GUATAMOZIN (*pointing out*):

Why should the priest say at the oracle,
"Take heed, my son, what *Huitzil* has decreed!
The Emperor is the shield of the strangers! If
He lives, Anahuac must die,—so choose
Between them!"

TECUICHPO:

And you chose against my father!

GUATAMOZIN:

For what reason? Has he not sold his Empire,—

Cast out his wealth, as tribute to a King,
Whom we have never seen nor heard before?
Because Malinche had threatened him, to go
In peace,—and in his pride,—a prisoner
To suit the strangers? He is starving, now,
Because we have decreed Malinche shall starve!
Well, that is destiny, Tecuichpo,
Where you have proved your own worst enemy!

TECUICHPO:

Yet he was still his guest.

GUATAMOZIN (*bitterly*):

To insult his gods?
To desecrate his temples! Ha, his guest,,—
When, coming of their own accord from Tuzpan,
They bind Quauhpopoca and his two sons,
And, on the instant, burn them,—when your *father*
Could have but raised his hand, and, in one force,
We would have swept the Palace of Axaya!

(*Pausing, when, during the interval, the murmurs in the valley are head. Resuming in a low, intense tone*)—

Ah, what was written on that silent face,
Tecuichpo, in that still hour of sorrow?

(*With a gesture, Off.*)

You hear? It was his cry in the hearts of the people!

(*Turning to the edge of the azotea and gazing Off.*)

TECUICHPO (*an impulse, as she rushes to his side*):

Did not my father suffer? Did not Malinche
Accuse him still because Quauhpopoca
Had said he acted on the Emperor's order?

What did they do, but snatch him in his chamber,
And, like a thief, shackle his hands together!
Oh, it was cruel to his pride, Guatamo!
It was a shaft in his heart, while tears of pride
Rolled down his cheeks!

(GUATAMOZIN *is silent, all the while gazing Off.*)

Has he not felt the grief
Of his people? If Huitzil so decrees his death,
For love of Anahuac, he will not live,
Guatamo, if, in life, he sees his people
Degraded, and his Empire forced from him.
More cruel than Malinche is that his people
Have lost their faith in him. It is his duty,
As yours, Guatamo, and as soon as you,
He would have cast the strangers out of Aztlan,—
Had he foreseen this hour!

GUATAMOZIN (*bitterly, as he looks Off*):

Had—he—foreseen!

TECUICHPO:

But he has suffered, now.—He knows Malinche,—
That he is not a god,—not even a guest,
But a warrior, come to conquer. Now he sees,—
When it is all too late,—yet, in his grief,
He loves Anahuac!

GUATAMOZIN (*impatiently, as he faces her*):

Ha, to what end?—
Where are his orders? Shall we wait, here, till
Malinche has burned Tenochtitlan to ashes?

TECUICHPO:

No, but you hurt his pride, Guatamo.

GUATAMOZIN:

Pride?
Where was his pride, then, long ago?

TECUICHPO:

Because
You roused the people.

GUATAMOZIN:

I?—No, they, themselves,
Tecuichpo, while I have striven as
I could to hold them!

TECUICHPO (*pleadingly*):

Ah, but wait his orders!

GUATAMOZIN (*pointing Off*):

Do you hear, out yonder? The Chiefs are waiting,—
The signal-fires are rising on the temples,
While at the first pale light of dawn, the drums,
On the azoteas of Huitzil, will
Be heard—far off, and a million tribesmen
Hurled against the Palace of Axaya!
What matters, then, if Montezuma knows
The rights of his people, when the stroke has fallen!

TECUICHPO (*beseechingly*):

Ah, you can wait a little longer, 'tzin!
In your allegiance, wait for his command,
And gladly he will die if needs be!
(*With enthusiasm, as* GUATAMOZIN *wavers*)—
In
The early morning I shall go to him,
And, as an Emperor, he will give his orders,—

When see (*partly unfastening two scarfs that are twined about her shoulders*)—
——if war is needless, I shall wave
This green scarf from the azotea of his chamber,
Which means,—Malinche resolves to leave the city!
While if I wave the white, in life or death,
It is his wish Anahuac should live!

GUATAMOPIN (*after a moment's deliberation, as he gazes into her eyes and decides*):

Ay,—till the morrow!

TECUICHPO (*stretching her arms toward him with a smile*):

'Tzin!—

GUATAMOZIN (*as he clasps her in his arms*):

So shall I wait
A little while—for *you,—Tecuichpo!*

(*The lovers remain in each other's arms, while the weird, far cry of the approaching tribes is heard once more. With the fall of twilight, the glow in the West has faded, while the shadows of night have gradually lowered on the scene. Slow Curtain.*)

ACT IV—SCENE 2

SCENE—*Montezuma's apartments in the Palace of Axaya, the Spanish quarters of Cortez.*

At Right, at a considerable diagonal, is a flight of steps, leading out on a wide stone balcony, without balustrade. Through this is visable a broad stretch of clear sky, with the azoteas of several houses in the near neighborhood. The ceiling of the apartment itself

is low and curiously carved. The walls are covered with grotesque symbols, as well as the supporting columns of the opening leading out on the azotea.

Curtained entrances, First Right, First and Third Left. Directly Back, a low throne on a dais, with two seats, Down Right Center and Down Left Center.

(MONTEZUMA *is discovered in a dejected attitude on the throne, at Back, with* MAXTLA *approaching from Right, having just made his entrance.* TCALAC *is standing among a group of caciques, at Left. Spanish spearsmen are standing as guards at several doors of the apartment.*)

(*A distant murmur is heard in the city, Off Right.*)

MAXTLA (*to* MONTEZUMA, *as he approaches him from Right*):

The 'tzin is waiting on the Temple, Sire,
And, in alliance with your brother's forces,
Transformed the city to a battleground;
Stripped palaces to hold the tribes,—destroyed
The bridges,—raised barricades along
The causeways, that the merest hovel, now,
Is turned into a fortress.

MONTEZUMA (*shaking his head sadly*):

My poor city!

MAXTLA:

While a word from the 'tzin would loosen the tribes,
That out of silence such a fury would rise,
As Tenochtitlan has never yet beheld!

MONTEZUMA (*bewilderedly*):

And to what end, Maxtla? Why should we see

The city in arms? Why are my children wretched,
If *I* can wait? I know their needs and wishes!

(*Rising and approaching, longingly, the First Entrance at Left.*)

Is then Malinche never to send response!—
Why is he waiting?

(*With deep resentment, as he turns to Center*)—

Has he, then, forgot
That I had come here of my own free will,—
Ah, not to see my brother ruling, with
The 'tzin, calling the nations of my Empire!

TCALAC (*speaking from the group of caciques, at Left*):

The oracle of Huitzil, Sire, roused the people.

MONTEZUMA (*turning about and facing* TCALAC):

Then why am I the Emperor, that such
An oracle can pass without my sanction?

(*Pausing a while, as though waiting for response*)—

Why cast a bloodshed upon Aztlan, when
A war would only force us to destruction?

(*After a thoughful pause*)—

Why hasten a calamity so soon,
When peace may halt the course of destiny,
And save Anahuac a little longer?

(*Reverting gradually to his habitual meditation*)—

Ah,—is it not decreed Aztlan shall fall,
As other nations fell before us?

(*Shaking his head*)—

It
May come to pass!

(*As he attempts to rise out of his lethargy*)—
But let us hold a while
And strive for peace! In peace, no sorrow comes;
Fate spins destruction in the wars of nature,
Not in its sweetness.

MAXTLA (*doubtfully*):
Yet Malinche may not
Accord.

MONTEZUMA (*angrily, as he asserts himself*):
Then we shall see, by Mictlan!

(*The curtain parts at First Left and* CIHUACA *enters, austerely, accompanied by several other caciques.* MONTEZUMA *turns anxiously toward him, but in a quiet, reserved manner, as though hardening himself for the worst, while, at the same time,* CIHUACA *approaches him at Center.*)

CIHUACA (*after a moment's hesitation*):
Sire,
Command the heavens to fall, as to persuade
Malinche to see you!

MONTEZUMA (*stifling his disappointment*):
And why not?

CIHUACA:
He scoffed
At your trust, Sire, and to his Chieftains cried,
"What good, now, is this dog of a King, who lets
Us starve before his eyes? Humph,—did he not
Betray us to Narvaez? And does he not
Suffer his markets to be closed, that we

Are forced to die like beasts, here!

(*Impersonating the harsh tone of Cortez*)—

Tell your Monarch,
If he is such a god-head with his people,
To open the markets, or, at any cost,
We'll see to that *ourselves!*"

MONTEZUMA (*his head sinking with wounded pride*):

—Gods! Gods!

(*With sudden control, he raises his head proudly, knits his brow with stifled anger, and, in imminent silence, paces slowly to the back of the room and mounts his throne.*)

MONTEZUMA (*turning abruptly on* MAXTLA):

Lord Maxtla,——

(*Grimly, as he lifts his voice and extends an outstretched hand before him*)—

You tell Malinche that I desire to see him,—
Or I shall give the word that will unloose
On him the forces of *Anahuac!*

(*A pause, as* MAXTLA *moves off, Left, accompanied by several attendants.*)

CIHUACA (*with a burst of warlike enthusiasm, as* MONTEZUMA *slowly withdraws his hand and gradually the muscles of his countenance relax*):

Now *Montezuma* speaks, Sire, who once led
The ancient armies,—when in conquest rose
The glories of Aztlan,—and, in far dominions,
The Aztec swept the nations,—when an *Empire*
Sprung from the rock of Tenoch!

MONTEZUMA (*after a pause, as he relapses, once more, into his habitual meditation*):

That was once
Cihuaca!—but these are evil days,
When even the gods declare against us!

TCALAC:

Sire,
Not while the people are in arms to free you!

MONTEZUMA (*dubiously, as he shakes his head*):

Poor children! Do they know how long? Oh, what
Lone chance against a destiny that wields
The thunder of Heaven? Are there not beyond
The seas, perhaps,—a thousand Empires such
As we?

CIHUACA:

Sire,—look about you!

MONTEZUMA (*sadly*):

Ay, the present!
(*With the haze of prophecy in his eyes*)—
It is the future we should fear—
(*Repeating pessimistically*)—
—the future,—
When my poor children will be slaves, and in
Their hearts will have forgot the glory
And the nobility of their own people;
When they will serve the Paleface in the fields,
(*With reverential awe, as he looks out*)—
And bow to the unseen Power of the world,—
To which we all must bow!

(*The curtain parts at Left, and* DONA MARINA

enters, in nervous, authoritative manner, accompanied by FATHER OLMEDO, *with a large red cross marked on his surplice, followed by two other priests,* MAXTLA *and the remaining caciques.* CIHUACA, *dejected, joins the group, Up Left.*)

DONA MARINA (*sharply*):

My master says, Sire,—
He does not care to see you!

MONTEZUMA (*nonplused*):

How is that?

DONA MARINA:

And what is more, he says, that he has swept
Away any such forces as were raised
Against him,—nor does he fear the Aztecs!

MONTEZUMA (*threateningly*):

Then
Malinche had best beware, for, even now,
I hear the moan of Anahuac!

DONA MARINA (*smiling with disdain*):

Oh, Sire,
He knows, as well as you, the rise of the tribes,
But does he care for that? No, he is angry,
Because, should you desire, you *could* disperse them,
Open the markets and let in supplies,
Of which we have great need.

MONTEZUMA:

And have I not?
It lies much deeper than my words can tell!
My people are no more my people! Here,

They see me in close friendship with you,—in
Return, to be insulted! Ah, they know
That I have served Malinche too well, and for
His thanks, showers on me ingratitude.
Has he not gone to desecrate my temples;
Pull down my fathers' gods, and then he marvels
Why priest and people, to a man, have risen.
Aztlan is not Tlascala, Malinche! (*Threateningly*)

DONA MARINA (*turning and indicating* FATHER OLMEDO):

He would have kept his faith, Sire, had you cherished
The thoughts of this good man. He would believe,
Then, that you held in abhorrence the foul gods
Of Aztlan!

MONTEZUMA:

To betray my gods!

DONA MARINA (*fearlessly, as she points at him*):

Because
They are an insult to the Light of Heaven,
A sacrilege to the great God, Sire!

MONTEZUMA (*indignantly*):

How?

DONA MARINA:

Christ was the *Saviour* of Mankind! He wept
For little children, and the weak, he blessed!
He did not sacrifice them to his worship!

MONTEZUMA (*scornfully*):

And is that all, Malinche?

DONA MARINA (*ecstatically*):

No! He was fair!
A wondrous light shone from his eyes, they say,
And though His Mother sprung of lowly people,
Still did He bear Himself the King of Kings!
His touch, to prove that He was more than mortal,
Lifted the cripples from their beds, while at
His voice, even the dead rose from their tombs!

(OLMEDO *and the two Priests, divining the significance of* MARINA'S *words, here, in unison, utter the word, "Amen," at the same time crossing themselves.* MONTEZUMA, *at once, turns his attention to* OLMEDO, *and, wonderingly, attempts to decipher the meaning of the sign.*)

MONTEZUMA:

And what is that?—

DONA MARINA (*reverently*):

That is the Blessed Cross,
Whereon the Saviour died.

MONTEZUMA (*disdainfully*):

So? We have such
A sign in Tlaloc!

DONA MARINA (*marking with pleasure Montezuma's interest*):

Yes, Sire! He did
Not care for Life, and so he showed the world,
In leaving, how He loved it best.

MONTEZUMA (*repeating slowly after her*):

He did

Not care for Life, and yet He loved it best?
(*In confusion*)
Ah, how is that, Malinche?

DONA MARINA:

To prove, O Sire,
He loved the Spirit more, the Charity
We hold beyond the flesh, beyond the dross,
That makes this Life a burden.

MONTEZUMA (*regretfully*):

So He died?

DONA MARINA:

And blessed in Heaven, that He is called the Saviour!

MONTEZUMA:

The poor, at best, may thirst for consolation,
While we all seek some proof of a Hereafter,
But why is Life made such a dim despair?
Is Fate not, in itself, too sorrowful,
To dwell upon the fruitlessness of Life?
Ah then, Life *is* a burden!
(*Shaking his head sadly, with a skeptical smile.*)
Yet I see
Malinche loves wealth, and all that wealth can bring.

DONA MARINA:

Malinche is not the Christ.

MONTEZUMA:

Ah, yet,
He speaks of Christ, and preaches Charity,
While he attacks my gods for cruelties

That he, himself, has shown. What are his virtues,
That he should dwell so much on Christ, when *I*
Can boast of Quetzal? Did no blossoms bloom
Before your God? Oh, heed, then, unto Quetzal!
A wondrous light shone from his eyes, they say!
He taught the birds to sing, the plains to spring,
The maize to ripen in the warmth of the sun,
For he was Nature's god, and what is Nature
In the bloom of the flowers, let no man teach us further!

DONA MARINA:

Christ is the Soul!

MONTEZUMA:

So Quetzal is the Soul,
For nothing is there more divine than Nature!
If Quetzal is the spirit of the heart,
The light of the Heavens, the warmth of the sunshine,

(*Changing, instantly, to a fierce attitude.*)

So do we pray to Huitzil—in our *arms!*

(*In disgust, as he indicates Olmedo.*)

Oh what, pray, has Malinche to do with *him,*
Tearing our temples down and what is sacred,
Striving to violate for nothing better?
Our best is as his best—our worst, no worse,
Except we know that Huitzil is not Quetzal!

(*Scornfully.*)

Oh, you pretend to cast the Demon from you?

(*Threateningly.*)

See to it, for that Demon is our *arms,*
And, in our arms, we worship *Huitzil!*

(*Contemptuously, as the distant murmur is gradually beginning to rise.*)

You would cast the Demon from you, but I see
Malinche is happy to accord with him!

(*With a wave of his hand, as he rises from his throne.*)

Oh, give me Truth, while, as it seems, my fathers,
In the great wars, as in the songs of nature,
Were nearer the great Truth of Life than you!

(*With an imperious gesture.*)

Go! Tell Malinche that he had best beware,
For even now I hear the cry of Aztlan!

(*Just as he stepping from the dais,* TECUICHPO, *excited, enters from Right, and rushes toward her father.*)

TECUICHPO (*breathlessly*):

Sire!

(*Meanwhile, exeunt, 1st Left,* MARINA, OLMEDO, *and the two Priests.*)

MONTEZUMA (*at Center*):

Yes, Tecuichpo?

TECUICHPO (*close to him, with intensity, while nervous curiosity is manifest on the faces of the caciques*):

The 'tzin is waiting!

MONTEZUMA (*sadly, as he tenderly embraces her*):

Then daughter, I shall give my last command!
If Fate has spoken here, let him will Fate,
If he can hold, where I have failed to do it.
For me, if ever I should live to see Malinche

Retrace his course over Ithualco,
And, once again, Tenochtitlan is blest
With peace, I shall retire to a temple,
Deep in the vaults of death and wait my hour.

TECUICHPO (*sympathetically*):

Oh, Sire, my father!—

MONTEZUMA:

Give the 'tzin my blessing,
And if he crossed my wishes, still he served
Anahuac.

(*After a thoughtful pause.*)

Ah, it may be, Malinche
Will force me, at the end, to appease the tribes.
Should it be so,

(*With a throb in his voice*)

—let Guatamozin do
His duty!

(*Loosening his hold from about Tecuichpo's shoulders, and, bowing his head, covering his face with his hands.*)

I have nothing further!

(*With a stifled cry,* TECUICHPO *leaps on the open azotea, Right, and quickly unloosening the white scarf, before the Spanish Guards can reach her or anyone has ascertained her motive, waves it frantically Off Right.*

The low murmur, previously heard, rises instantly into a roar, like the rushing of far waters. The ominous drum-beats, on the temples, echo and re-echo above the general confusion. The advance of the Aztec

forces is plainly marked, as the barbaric rhythm of cymbals and conches is distinguished in the distance.)

TECUICHPO (*raising her arms with a triumphant cry*):

They

Are coming,—*coming!!*

(*Several caciques rush out on the azotea as a protection to* TECUICHPO, *when at the same moment, a cannon is fired from the ramparts of the Palace.* TECUICHPO, *as she looks out, utters a shriek and runs back to her father, standing in terror, as though facing the judgment of some Destiny.* MAXTLA, *and other caciques remain on the azotea, when they suddenly back away, as a cloud of arrows, stones and other missiles pours in on them. The few Spanish Guards, in the apartment, take positions behind columns and other places of safety, while those armed with arquebuse, fire into the mob. Every once in a while, above the deafening sound of battle, the curses of the Spaniards are heard, overhead and inside the Palace; while, outside, the war-cry of the Aztec tribes, "Al-a-lala, al-a-lala, al-a-lala!" keeps up continually, except, every now and then, after a crash of cannon, moans and shrieks of terror are heard, with a temporary cessation, only to be renewed, instantly, more violently than ever.*)

MONTEZUMA (*as he glances out over the city*):

Gods!—My poor, poor people!

(*He presses his hand against his eyes, and turning away in grief, supports himself, trembling, on the arm of his throne.*)

MAXTLA (*excitedly, as he describes the battle*):

Malinche has flow from the gate! He cries for them

To follow him! Now!

(*A loud resounding crash is heard.*)

He has thrown himself
On the 'tzin's own force!

(MAXTLA *and the caciques give a shout of joy, on top of which the Spaniards answer by a series of cannon shouts. A moan of pain issues from the Aztec ranks.*)

MONTEZUMA (*as he stretches his clinched fists above him in a spasm of prayer, and sinks back on his throne, burying his face once more in his hands*):

Oh!—Oh!

MAXTLA:

He tries again!—
This time the 'tzin will answer!

(*After a short pause, in the din of battle.*)

He has fallen!—
Now he rises again!

(*The Aztecs set up a shout.*)

And still they come,
Coatepecs! Cholulans! Alcomanes!

(*Pause.*)

Again, the 'tzin! He blocks the attack! Look there!
Little by little forced back to the walls!

MONTEZUMA (*torn with suspense*):

Who? Who?

MAXTLA (*jubilantly, as he turns to come down, amid the cries of the Aztecs*):

Malinche, Sire! He's forced back to the walls!

MONTEZUMA (*with incredulous surprise, as he sits up on his throne.*)

Malinche? Ah, that is well for Gautamozin,

(*With a glow in his eyes*)

And my brave people!

(*With the sally of Cortez repulsed, the noise of the Aztec attack continues. There is suddenly a bang, then a crash at* 1ST *Left Entrance, and Cortez rushes in with blazing eyes, his left arm in a sling, and his armor covered with blood and dust. He is accompanied, as usual, by the excited* MARINA, *and followed by several of his cavaliers, bedraggled as himself, their eyes swollen from the heat and the perspiration dripping from their faces.*)

DONA MARINA (*violently*):

Sire! My master vows
That the whole city will be *crushed* beneath him,
And, pitilessly, leave Anahuac
A *waste,* unless, in faith, you go out yonder,
And bid your people to lay down their arms!

MONTEZUMA (*coldly*):

Why should Malinche come to me *now,* so *late?*

(*Shaking his head*)

I do not care, nor wish to speak with him!

DONA MARINA:

So will you see your people slaughtered?

MONTEZUMA (*with vexatious sorrow*):

I

Desire only to die!

(*In despair, as he raises his hand*)

You see the state
To which my willingness to serve has brought me?
Ah, it is now that I am left alone,
My household driven from me, my caciques,
In arms, my people in rebellion!

(*With angry disgust*)

Go!—
Defend yourself as best you may, Malinche,
You never will leave here, alive!

DONA MARINA (*with diplomacy*):

But if
My master promises to leave the city.

MONTEZUMA (*with indifference*):

Too late! They never would believe me, nor
The promises that you have made—and broken.

DONA MARINA:

Have you no pity for your people?

MONTEZUMA (*proudly*):

Ah,
My brave people, I see them now! I hear
Them struggling for their homes!

(*With sharp sorrow.*)

Would they believe me,
I, who am here, a prisoner among you?

(*Shaking his head with a vengeful smile.*)

No! You will never leave these walls alive!

DONA MARINA (*changing her tactics as she appeals to his heart*):

But think of bloodshed, Sire—and the death
Of multitudes! Oh, does my master strive
For that, while he, perforce, defends himself?
You would not wish to see your city burnt,
And useless sorrow cast about you? Think
Of what it means to ravage what was once
A beautiful dominion,—even if
My master pays most dearly? Would not *you,*
Sire, suffer the more in such a conflict,
To see your people trampled in the dust,
Your Empire, pillaged in the flames of war?

MONTEZUMA (*perceptibly touched*):

By those, who would pretend to be our friends,
Oh, is it well to stir from one's resolve,
(*Gazing steadfastly at Marina*)
Ay, where appeal is made through fear?
(*After a thoughtful pause*)
But you
Will understand me, *later,* when I say
That I desire to die, rather than see
Anahuac plunged in the Abyss of Time!
(*With quiet reserve, as he slowly rises*)
If it is destined that my people perish,
The Montezumas should be first to fall!
(*As he calmly steps down from the dais*)
Cihuaca!

CIHUACA (*coming forward*):

Sire?

It

MONTEZUMA:

My tilmatli! I

Shall speak to my children!

(*The harsh murmur, outside, is still continueing, while* CIHUACA, *assisted by several others, hurry into the inner chamber, 3rd Left, and re-enter, instantly, with the "tilmatli," and with much ceremony lay it over* MONTEZUMA'S *shoulders, fastening it, in front, with an ornate clasp of green "chalchivitl." Others arrange on his head the Mexican crown or "Copilli" resembling, in some respects, the Pope's tiara, but consisting, chiefly, of wonderful plumes, sprinkled with jewels. In this attire, preceded by a Cacique, bearing the golden wand of authority, the Emperor, accompanied by* CORTEZ *and a Spanish guard, as well as by some of his own Indian nobles, calmly ascends the few steps that led out on the azotea, bringing him, Off Right, face to face with his people.*

No sooner has the Cacique, with the wand, made his appearance, than the attacking Indians, outside, divine the meaning. The noise of the assault is hushed instantly, and when MONTEZUMA, *himself, finally appears, in the quieting crowds, a deep moan passes around, like the half-uttered exclamations of reverence, after which dead sielnce follows, when* MONTEZUMA, *with re-asserted dignity, addresses his people.*)

MONTEZUMA (*in a calm, modulated voice*):

Why do I see my children in arms, and *here,*
Before the Palace of my fathers? Oh,
Is it because you think your Sovereign,
A prisoner, that you wish to release him? So,
Then you have acted rightly—yet, you are
Mistaken! I am *not* a prisoner!

(*A low sullen murmur rises*)

These strangers are my *guests!*

(*The murmur rises still louder, then finally lowers, as the Emperor is about to resume.*)

Merely from choice
Have I remained with them, and I can leave
When I should so desire.

(*Indicating Cortez, standing beside him.*)

Here is Malinche.

(*Again the angry murmur rises.*)

Ah, do you come to drive him from the city?
There is no need of that!

(*Lifting his hand*)

Open the way,
And he will leave here of his own accord!

First Voice (*outside, amid a general murmur*):

The Pale-face will not leave these walls alive!

Second Voice:

So we have sworn!

(*Ferocious laughter.*)

Third Voice (*scoffingly*):

The war will soon be over!

(*The angry howls continue, and as* Montezuma *asserts himself, again, the mob gradually subsides.*)

Montezuma (*on the shout, as he instantly asserts his authority*):

Return to your homes, then, and lay down your arms!
Show your obedience! They will go away

From here, back to their lands across the seas,
When all shall be in peace, once more, within
The walls of Tenochtitlen!

(*Cries of "Coward!", "Woman!", "Coward!", are heard amid the general howls of scorn.*)

FIRST VOICE (*outside*):

Ha! They have made a woman of you, coward!

SECOND VOICE:

Go weave and spin, woman!

(*Followed by loud laughs of scorn*).

MONTEZUMA (*with outraged dignity, as he rises to his height and lifts his arm in command*):

As I am still
Your *King,* I bid you to lay down your arms!!

(*With a sudden terrific yell, a countless mass of stones and arrows pours into the aperture. The Spanish guards, taken off their feet by the unexpectedness of the attack, endeavor their best to shield* MONTEZUMA *with their bucklers, but before they can reach the Emperor, several arrows pierce him, while a large stone hits him on the forehead, close to the temple.*)

MONTEZUMA (*with a cry of anguish, as he falls back into the chamber*):

Oh!—*Guatamozin!!*—

(*In a faint, with the blood streaming from his forehead, he falls backward from the azotea into the chamber, caught, just in time, in the arms of* MAXTLA. *A veritable havoc ensues.*

As though overwhelmed by the sacrilege of the act,

the throngs, outside, set up a dismal howl, and, panic-stricken, hasten away as fast as they can. While the moans are gradually dying in the distance, the "copilli" is removed and a bandage quickly fastened about the wounded forehead of MONTEZUMA, *after which he is carried, more dead than alive, to the arm-chair, Down Left Center, where he is made to lie back, propped up by cushions. He is surrounded by* TECUICHPO *and the Caciques, who attend him in his affliction.*)

TECUICHPO (*sobbing on his breast*):

Oh, Sire, my father, *father!*

MONTEZUMA (*slowly opening his eyes and gazing bewilderedly before him*):

That is the *end!!*

(*With bitter grief*)—

Oh!—There is *nothing* further!—

(*With a violent spasm, as he tears the bandage from his forehead*)

I do not care! Take it away!

CIHUACA:

Oh, Sire,

Do you not see us?

(*Tying the bandage on again.*)

TCALAC:

We are here beside you!

TECUICHPO (*smoothing the bandage with her hands*):

And it pains, father!

MONTEZUMA (*with spasmodic attempts to pull the bandage off again*):

—in my heart,—

(*Bursting into tears*)

—my *heart!*

To think the *meanest* should have turned on me!

(*Sobbing*)

My *children!* To have cast me from them!

MAXTLA:

Sire!

DONA MARINA (*with sincere feeling*):

Sire, in his thanks, my master begs forgiveness!
He knows, how often, he has seemed ungracious,
But there, he hopes, you will forgive him! You
Will rule, still, for the world will not forget
The service, in your name, to the White People,
And to the Spirit of the Christ we serve

(*Pointing to Heaven*)

While God, alone, shall pass the judgment!

(*Here* FATHER OLMEDO *flings himself on his knees before the dying Emperor, gazing with blank stare before him, while the priest holds aloft an ebony Curcifix, to which is fastened a silver image of the Christ.*)

DONA MARINA (*after a reverential pause, as she strives to draw Montezuma's attention to Olmedo*):

Sire?

MONTEZUMA (*riveting his gaze, for a long time, on the Image of the Crucifix*):

Why do you bring me this, and now, Malinche?

Have I not still my father's gods before me?

(*Turning away his eyes*)

Are we not destined to be borne to the Sun,
In his triumphant course through Heaven, till with
The years, the Spirit passes to the clouds,
Or to the songs of beautiful birds, as they breathe
God's grace in the gardens of Paradise?

(*Pausing a while, as the pain of his wound is shown on his features*)

Oh, I have but a little time to live,
And cannot, now, desert the faith of my fathers!

(*Feebler, as he lays his arm gently about Tecuichpo*)

Malinche, care for my children, for my household!
Of all the jewels in my Empire, *these*
Are the most precious! You will do this for me,
If only in return for service?

(*With the same vacant gaze in his eyes*)

Oh, Guatamo!—
You kill your monarch for Anahuac,
Because he is the friend of strangers!

(*With a cry of anguish*)

God!—
Forgive him—there! I say, forgive him!

(*With a cry of pain*).

Oh!

(*After a long pause, as the end draws near*)

And little, now—the light—begins to fade!

(*Gradually, out of dead silence, the war-drums of the temples are heard again, echoing and re-echoing, and, soon after, the gongs and the rising murmur of the Aztecs, returning to renew the battle, increasing more*

and more, as they approach, until the terrible war-cry of "Al-a-lala, al-a-lala, al-a-lala!", is clearly distinguished, with the menacing and ominous tones of an infuriated people.

CORTEZ *and his Lieutenants, at the first signal of renewed attack, rush out of the apartment for the battlements above, while* TECUICHPO, *kneeling beside* MONTEZUMA, *and recognizing suddenly the first marks of death in the vacant gaze of her father, falls, crying on his breast. The Caciques, in grief, turn their backs or cover their faces with their hands.*

The clamor, outside, becomes terrific. The first cannon is fired, the clash of resounding steel is heard on all sides, with the war-cry of the Aztecs intermingled with the curses of the Spaniards, when the curtain lowers slowly on the grief-stricken countenance of MONTEZUMA, *as he sits rigid, in his imperial robes, gazing steadfastly before him, with the vacant stare of Death in his eyes.)*

THE END.

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